THE PREFACE TO A Critical Dissertation ON THE BOOK of *JOB*.

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THE PREFACE.

ABOUT ſix years being now paſt ſince the firſt publiſhing this book on Job, the author might juſtly be thought wanting in that reſpect which is due to the publick, ſhould he ſuffer it to appear a ſecond time without a Preface. The favourable reception it met with gave him the more pleaſure; as he perſuades himſelf, it was chiefly owing to the nature of his ſubject; and, on the writer's part, that love of truth which prompted him to ſeek it at the fountain-head.

Nevertheleſs he has not been unattentive to the exceptions that may have been taken to any part of the book. And what hath come to his knowledge of that kind, (to ſpeak at length in the firſt perſon) I ſhall here freely lay before the reader.

A paſſage, p. 178. of the former edition, where I mentioned the circumſtance of my ſituation as an excuſe for any errors that might have crept into the book, having been excepted againſt as liable to miſconſtruction; though I received the intimation but at ſecond hand, for I had no perſonal knowledge of the gentleman that made the objection; I have complied with the delicacy of his judgment, and ſtruck it quite off: being unwilling to let any thing ſtand, of little conſequence in itſelf, that might give offence to any good man, or prejudice the honeſt intention of the book. And yet, if Plu-

tarch's obſervation be well grounded, that it is neceſſary for a writer of hiſtory to reſide in ſome great town where arts and learning flouriſh, for the advantage of libraries and learned men of all ſorts to converſe with *: a writer on the ſcriptures, ſurely, may for the ſame reaſon wiſh himſelf at certain times nearer to the ſeats of learning, without being ſuppoſed to intend the leaſt reflection on his own neighbourhood; unleſs it be a reflection to ſay, that we are two hundred miles diſtant from any univerſity.

There are two other particular paſſages, which were excepted to by the ſame perſon; which whether I ſhould impute to his delicacy, or to my own free and unguarded way of expreſſing myſelf, the reader muſt judge. Perhaps there may be ſomewhat of both in the caſe, and ſo I may be glad to compound the matter.

But not to dwell long upon a trifle; he was ſcandalized at my ſaying (p. 392.) *Even a* ſilly woman *could expreſs her faith of a reſurrection*, &c. as if the epithet had reflected ſomething derogatory to the character of Martha the ſiſter of Lazarus. Whereas I am willing to believe and hope, that moſt of my *gentle* readers took it as it was meant, to denote a *plain ſimple woman*; one who to all appearance was not deeply read in matters of divinity, nor overmuch given to ſpeculation; but *cumbered about many things* of quite another nature; for which ſhe received a ſoft rebuke from our Lord himſelf, which I might plead in my defence if it were neceſſary. But I believe I may venture to let this expreſſion paſs without any farther explanation.

The other exception of this gentleman, was to my calling a miſtake of biſhop Patrick's (p. 153.) the good biſhop's *blunder*.

But if there be a fault here I muſt freely and fairly plead ignorance in excuſe for it. For tho' I was long ſince taught not to call a *ſpade* a *ſpade*, I confeſs I have no notion yet, but that a *blunder* may be called a *blunder*.

I have a great reſpect for the memory of biſhop Patrick; whoſe piety, learning, induſtry, and judgment are conſpicuous in his writings. If he be any where deficient, it is where a critical knowledge of the Hebrew is required: and I ſuppoſe it was this that made him ſo often depend upon the ſuperior ſkill of his admired friend Dr. Allix. Nevertheleſs his Paraphraſes and Commentary on the holy Scriptures are a valuable work, which I have often conſulted to my ſatisfaction. But, *opere in longo* (as the poet ſays) the exacteſt writer may ſometimes chance to nod.

And therefore I hope I ſhall be allowed the benefit of this plea, for a writer far leſs conſiderable than biſhop Patrick, for I am about to make this worthy prelate the moſt ſuitable amends in my power, by acknowledging two groſs blunders of my own.

One is at p. 315, where in explaining Deut. xiv. 1. *Ye ſhall not cut yourſelves*—in the Hebrew, *tithgodedu*; I read it by miſtake (as the Hebrew let-

* See Plutarch's preface to the lives of Demoſthenes and Cicero.

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ters for n and g are very much alike) *tithnodedu*, and ſo explained it. Whereas *tithgodedu* is the ſame word which is uſed 1 *Kings* xviii. 28. of the prieſts of Baal *cutting themſelves after their manner with knives*, &c. So that it ſeems rightly rendered here by our tranſlators, *ye ſhall not cut yourſelves.* And yet the Chaldee paraphraſt in both places turns it by a word that ſignifies *tumultuari:* and as the noun *gedud* always denotes a *troop*, or band of men; the verb may very naturally mean *aſſembling in troops* or tumultuouſly together. But as little depends upon fixing the ſenſe of the word here; I have rather choſen to ſtrike off four lines where the miſtake lay.

The other blunder of mine is at p. 412. where the ſound miſled me, and not the ſight: for I miſtook one t for another in the word *tiſhpot*, and explained it as if the laſt t had been a *teth* and not a *tau.* But here too it happens to be of little conſequence; and I have corrected it by ſtriking off two lines.

The reader probably will conclude from theſe inſtances, that whoever meddles with the Hebrew ought to have his eyes, as well as wits about him, And he will judge very rightly. I have often admired, and cannot but aſcribe it to that providence which has ever ſignally diſplayed itſelf for the preſervation of religion amongſt men; that books ſo old as thoſe of the Hebrew Code, conſidering the nature both of the language and the character, ſhould come down to us ſo entire as they are at preſent, and with ſo few variations or miſtakes of tranſcribers. For theſe miſtakes are, in reality, allowing for the circumſtances I have mentioned, few and inconſiderable. And even ſome of theſe miſtakes afford a convincing proof of the religious exactneſs with which theſe books were anciently tranſcribed. This may ſeem a paradox to ſome; but I could give inſtances if it were a proper place.

I was the more ſolicitous however to correct theſe two *errata* in the book; leſt ſome Capellus ſhould ariſe in future times, who might take occaſion from theſe hallucinations of mine to increaſe the various lections of the Hebrew text.

But having thus rectified what I had myſelf diſcovered to be amiſs, and conſidered the exceptions that have come to me in the *oral* way: I am now, with the reader's leave, to take notice of one or two with which I have been favoured from the preſs.

The firſt is in Mr. Heath's *Eſſay towards a new Engliſh Verſion of the Book of Job, p.* 129.

Job ſays, Ch. xxxi. 26—28. To give it in Mr. Heath's verſion, thus, *If I looked up to the ſun when it ſhone, or to the moon when it went on in its brightneſs, and my heart was ſecretly enticed, and my mouth kiſſed my hand; this alſo were a crime for the judges, for I ſhould have given the lie to God who is above.*

Our Engliſh tranſlation thus—*This alſo were an iniquity to be puniſhed by the judge.*

There is no other material difference in the two tranſlations. And the Hebrew here is, *Gam hu yavon pelili*—rendered by the learned A. Schultens in his tranſlation of Job, *Etiam hæc iniquitas arbitratoria.* He had given a like interpretation to the phraſe before, at v. 11. where he renders *yavon pelilim, crimen arbitrorum quod arbitri vel mitiſſimi condemnare debeant*; *or, an iniquity ſo plain, that a perſon of the mildeſt diſpoſition, if he were put to judge of it, would certainly condemn it.* And this ſenſe of the word *pelilim* he confirms from *Deut.* xxxii. 31. *Their rock is not as our rock, even our enemies themſelves being judges, pelilim.*

This interpretation of Schultens I had followed; and from thence argued, that there is nothing intimated in this text of Job, Ch. xxi. 28. of a judicial trial or puniſhment, but only *the notoriety of the ſin obſerved.* Adding, that ſuppoſing it were rightly rendered, *an iniquity to be puniſhed by the judge*, yet this might well be underſtood of the ſupreme judge of all *.

But Mr. Heath's note here is this—*Eſſay*, &c. p. 129.

This paſſage ſeems to me a deciſive argument againſt the great antiquity of this book. The laws of the Moſaic polity were, I apprehend, the only ones in the world which puniſhed Idolatry; and it was the only nation before whoſe judges a man could be accuſed for paying adoration to the ſun and moon: this book therefore muſt have been written after their government was ſettled. The ſenſe which is put on this paſſage by the learned Schultens, and ſince adopted by the learned Mr. P. is evidently ſtrained, in order to evade the teſtimony which this paſſage bears againſt the great antiquity of the Poem. The paſſage from the ſong of Moſes, Deut. xxxii. 31. *carries in it the ſtrongeſt Teſtimony for the ſenſe I contend for; the image there being, the cauſe coming to a trial, whether the God of Iſrael or the gods of the nations were the moſt powerful; and this, he ſays, is ſo ſelf-evident, that if their enemies were to ſit as judges, they would determine the cauſe in favour of the God of Iſrael. What is this but to ſuppoſe that the* pelilim *are, in the primary ſenſe of the word, judges. And indeed Schultens hath rendered this by a word which in ſound only differs, but not in ſenſe: for what is* arbiter *but one who decides a queſtionable point? and* judex *is no more. And Mr. Peters is ſo preſſed with this, that he is reduced to this evaſion*; But ſuppoſing it were rightly rendered, an iniquity to be puniſhed by the judge; as this may well be underſtood of the ſupreme Judge of all, who ſhall ſay that it does not belong to him, as the Lord and Sovereign of the World, to puniſh thoſe who in effect deny him to be ſuch, and transfer his honour to another? *No one will ſay it, but thus much may be ſaid, that it is not at all to the purpoſe; for Job is here evidently ſpeaking of judges here below, the ſame judges who were to inflict the puniſhment for adultery; for thus much the phraſe* גם הוא *plainly imports.*

* *Crit. Diſſ. on Job.* p. 23.

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I have given the note entire, that ſo the argument may be ſeen in its full ſtrength.

And in anſwer to it, I muſt obſerve firſt, that Job is not here ſpeaking of *judges* either above or below; much leſs the *ſame judges who were to inflict the puniſhment* (if that be the meaning) *for adultery*, v. 11. For the word here is in the ſingular, *pelili*; whereas v. 11. it is in the plural, *pelilim*. And this diſtinction is well obſerved in the Bible-tranſlation, though not in Mr. Heath's. I will not call this an *evaſion* of this learned gentleman, but I hope I may, without offence, be allowed to call it an *eſcape*.

Next, as to גם הוא, *gam hu*, *etiam hoc*, even this (as it ſhould be rendered) we have no need to go back ſixteen or ſeventeen verſes, along to v. 11. for ſomething to which it may refer. No, the author of the Book of Job appears to write with more connection: and it evidently refers to what went immediately before, *viz.* the ſlight token here given of an idolatrous purpoſe or diſpoſition. For the Hebrew rendered literally is thus,

If I beheld the ſun when it ſhined, or the moon ſplendidly walking, and my heart were inticed in ſecret, and my hand kiſſed my mouth: gam hu, *even this were* yavon pelili —— Theſe are the two words in diſpute, whether they mean, an iniquity to be puniſhed by the judge; or ſuch as any good man of theſe times would judge to be ſo.

Now if *pelili* properly ſignify a judge, (that is, an authoritative judge) as Mr. H. contends; I think it muſt mean the ſupreme judge of all: becauſe no other could poſſibly take cognizance of ſuch a crime as this. We ſee it is here deſcribed as a ſeduction of the *heart*; and this *in ſecret*, *bas-ſether*; where there was no human eye, then, to obſerve it; or if there had, yet it was expreſſed by an action ſo ſlight, that (ſure) no human judicature could poſſibly take notice of it. No bowing of the Head for the mouth to met and kiſs the hand; but only the hand raiſed juſt to touch or kiſs the mouth.

For this way of expreſſing the thing is very obſervable *vat-tiſshak jad-i le-pi*, *et oſculata eſt manus mea os meum*; as the interlinear verſion literally—And I could wiſh that whoever attempts a tranſlation of the Scriptures, would make it as literal as poſſible.

If ſuch a crime as this then were to be brought into judgment, I ſuppoſe it appears plain that none but God could judge it. But if put as a *caſe*, for the opinion and reſolution of the good men of thoſe times, worſhippers of the true God like Job; I am perſuaded they would all of them have pronounced it a great iniquity or impiety.

Nay whether they would not have puniſhed it, and that ſeverely, if any proof of the thing could have been produced; is more than Mr. H. or I can tell.

It is enough for my purpoſe that they would have condemned it in their private thoughts or opinion. And this was the ſenſe which I preferred, in

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my own judgment, after Schultens, as beſt agreeing with the natural ſignification of the word *pelili*; the other ſuppoſition was only put as an *utrum horum*, for ſuch as might be pleaſed with it; and to ſhew, that even if this ſenſe were allowed, it would not ſerve the intended purpoſe.

Mr. H——'s miſtake throughout his whole note proceeds from his not diſtinguiſhing two things which are very diſtinct in themſelves, a judgment of *authority* and a judgment of *diſcernment* or a mere opinion. His argument required that the word *pelilim* ſhould ſignify judges in a ſenſe of *authority*, ſuch as were impowered to try and puniſh crimes. Otherwiſe the laws of the Moſaic polity here inſtanced as the only ones that puniſhed idolatry, would be nothing to the purpoſe. And yet this authoritative judging is preſently confounded with another ſort of judging very different from it, the mere giving of an opinion in a caſe. For this is certainly the meaning of Moſes, Deut. xxxii. 31. *Their rock is not as our rock, our enemies themſelves being judges, (pelilim)* that is in the judgment or opinion of our very enemies. What Mr. H. ſuggeſts of an *image* here given of *the cauſe coming to a trial — their enemies to ſit as judges whether the God of Iſrael or the gods of the nations were the moſt powerful*—if meant of a real, formal trial or judgment, is viſionary. For ſuch a cauſe, certainly, never came before any court of judicature ſince the beginning of the world. If meant in any other ſenſe, it is beſide the purpoſe. And this gentleman himſelf, and every ſkilful Hebræan, muſt ſoon ſee the difference, if he were to change *pelilim* here for *ſhophetim*, which is the proper word for *judges*, meaning officers of juſtice.

That the word *pelilim* cannot ſignify judges of this ſort, in its primary ſenſe at leaſt (as Mr. H. would have it) is very clear. It is well known, that the primary ſenſe of an Hebrew word muſt be fetched from the root or verb. And the verb *pillel* ſignifies merely *to be of opinion*, to *think*, or judge in that ſenſe: and (in the conjugation *hithpahel* chiefly) *to expreſs our thoughts in prayer*, to *intreat effectually*, or *appeaſe*, Beſide theſe, I know of no other meaning the word carries. And for the former ſenſe, I need only cite old Jacob's words to his Son Joſeph, who had preſented his children to him for a bleſſing: *Lo pillalti* (ſays the good old man) *I never thought to ſee thy face again; and lo! God hath ſhewed me alſo thy ſeed.* Gen. xlviii. 11.

To judge in an authoritative way, is always expreſſed by the word *ſhaphat*; as common a word almoſt as any in the Bible: And, what is remarkable, never uſed in the ſenſe of *pillel*, for a mere judgment of *opinion*. So that the Hebrew in this inſtance (and perhaps an hundred others) is leſs equivocal or ambiguous than the Latin or the Greek: for *judico* and κρίνω, in theſe two languages ſeem to be uſed, almoſt indifferently, in either ſenſe.

One of the moſt neceſſary rules in the ſtudy of the Hebrew, is to attend to the preciſe meaning of the root: for this may uſually be traced through all its branches. And a neglect of this rule is a principal ſource of the wide dif-

differences and miſtakes of the interpreters, both ancient and modern. One may obſerve it particularly in the inſtance now before us, of the word *pillel*, *pelilim*, &c. For it is certain that if Mr. Heath miſtakes here (as I think he does) he miſtakes in good company: and there are ſeveral places, where not only our own tranſlators, but others of undiſputed learning and good ſenſe, have rendered the words by *judging*, *judges*, *&c.*——

What then ſhall an obſcure writer do, who ventures to explain things otherwiſe than the generality of interpreters have done before him? He can only appeal (I think) to the genius of the language, and ſhew that if he errs he errs according to rule: and this will be ſome excuſe for him at leaſt, and ſave his modeſty.

Now I am perſuaded that the ſenſe of the verb *pillel* given above, may be traced through all its branches, and in every inſtance: and that there is no place of Scripture, where it ought not to be taken in one or other of theſe ſenſes, *viz.*

To *think*—to be of opinion—to give an opinion; and ſo to arbitrate——which is the fartheſt we can go with this branch.

Again, to *expreſs our thoughts* in prayer——and ſo, to intercede—to intreat effectually—or propitiate. This takes in the whole compaſs of the other branch. And all theſe ſenſes plainly differ from that authoritative judging here ſuppoſed.

And yet it is certain, that not only our own tranſlators, but the generality of interpreters, at leaſt among the moderns, have explained the word in certain places in this latter ſenſe. As there is a neceſſity of examining theſe places, the Phil-Ebræan Reader will excuſe it, and others may skip over a few pages if they pleaſe.

Pſalm cvi. 30. as it is tranſlated in our Bibles, ſeems to favour Mr. Heath's notion: *Then ſtood up Phineas, vajepallel, and* executed judgment, *and ſo the plague was ſtayed.*

The old tranſlation indeed, much nearer to the genuine ſenſe of the word; *Then ſtood up Phineas and* prayed. Had it been ſaid, *interceded*, it might have better expreſſed the Pſalmiſt's meaning: for Phineas, as we learn from the hiſtory, interceded effectually, though not by word but deed, and turned away God's wrath from his people. So that by that act of juſtice to which his zeal for God had prompted him, he is ſaid to have *made an atonement for the children of Iſrael* *. And therefore both the Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate render *jepallel* here by a word that ſignifies *propitiated.* Take it either in this ſenſe, or that of *interceding*; they are both very apt, and belong to the ſecond branch of ſignifications given above.

But now, if we were to ſuppoſe *jepallel*, in the caſe of Phineas, rightly rendered *executed judgment*: I think it would not ſerve Mr. Heath's purpoſe.

* Num. xxv. 13.

Becauſe

Becauſe we find by the hiſtory, that there was no form nor proceſs in this judgment: it was a caſe extraordinary, where a divine impulſe ſet him above all rules. Or, if we ſuppoſe ſuch a procedure cuſtomary in thoſe ancient times; and that *pelilim* (Job xxxi. 11.) may ſignify ſuch judges as theſe aſſembled in a tumultuous way, to try and puniſh for adultery, or any other heinous crime: then this will be one good proof, amongſt an hundred others, of the great antiquity of this book. As it agrees with the manners and cuſtoms of thoſe ancient times, when few large ſtates were formed, but men lived in families and tribes; and the whole neighbourhood, upon occaſion of any crime committed, came together to make enquiry, to paſs ſentence by a general voice, and ſo condemn and execute at once. We have ſeveral alluſions to ſuch a ſtate of things in this book of Job; and one or two (if I miſtake not) in this very chapter.

Thus Job xxxi. 24. *If I have lift up my hand againſt the fatherleſs, when I ſaw my help in the gate: then let mine arm fall from my ſhoulder-blade.* That is, I ſuppoſe, let me be pulled in pieces by the mob. A method of juſtice probably but too frequent in the infancy of ſtates; and which, as they grew more and more civilized, was always diſcountenanced and ſuppreſſed.

So again, v. 33, 34. we have a paſſage the more remarkable, as it alludes to the hiſtory of the firſt man, and his endeavouring to hide himſelf after his tranſgreſſion: which ſhews, (as well as ſeveral other alluſions made to it in ſcripture) that the relation given us Gen. iii. was all along conſidered as *hiſtorical*; and not merely as an *Æſopian Fable*, as a late ingenious writer ſeemed fond of repreſenting it—But the paſſage is thus—

Ver. 33, 34. *Did I cover my tranſgreſſions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my lurking-place* (for ſo the Hebrew *be-chubb-i*) *becauſe I feared a great multitude, or the contempt of families terrified me?*

We ſee here what it was that kept men in awe in thoſe ancient times; wicked men I mean, (for Job acted upon a much better principle) and deterred them from enormous crimes: it was the rage of the multitude, or populace; who naturally judge, or rather feel what is right, but whoſe paſſions are ſtrong; their counſels, reſolutions, actions, precipitate. Or elſe, it was the contempt of families (as Job expreſſes it) or the public ſhame of being condemned by the neighbouring families or tribes, aſſembled for this purpoſe. And here we may obſerve the firſt elements perhaps of civil government.

Job indeed in the two former chapters (*viz.* chap. xxix. and xxx.) hath given us ſuch an admirable picture of himſelf in the height of his proſperity, and the authority which he then maintained among his people; and again, in the depth of his diſtreſs, when his authority was quite ſunk, and himſelf deſpiſed and trampled on; and this intermixed with ſo many lively ſtrokes of the rudeneſs of thoſe times: that it is a wonder any one can read it either

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in the original or tranſlation, (but in the original eſpecially) without acknowledging the venerable antiquity of this book——which as it is the point in queſtion, I hope I may be excuſed this ſmall excurſion here.

There is another place where the verb *pillel* may ſeem to be uſed for *judging*, and has been ſo tranſlated, *viz.* 1 Sam. ii. 25. Old Eli ſays to his wicked ſons, *If one man ſin againſt another,* ופללו (*u-pillel-o*) *Elohim, the judge ſhall judge him: but if a man ſin againſt the Lord, Mi jithpallel ſo, Who ſhall intreat for him?* So our tranſlation.

But it muſt ſeem ſtrange, that the words *pillel* and *jithpallel*, which have the neareſt affinity with each other, ſhould ſignify two things ſo very different as to *judge* and to *intreat*; and this in the ſame ſentence. The natural rendring of the words is this, If one man ſin againſt another, *u-pillelu Elohim, they may* intreat, *or they may* propitiate God. They may bring their cauſe before him, and pray him to decide it: and in this caſe, a determination being once given, and full ſatisfaction made, every thing is ſet right again. But if a man ſin againſt *the Lord*, in ſo high and preſumptuous a manner as theſe ſons of Eli did; where ſhall the appeal lie, or who ſhall intreat for him? How ſhall he bring his cauſe, or who ſhall plead it for him before the incenſed judge?

The miſtake is in the pointing, *pillelo* inſtead of *pillelu*. But all the old tranſlators, the Chaldee, Septuagint, and Latin Vulgate, favour the reading *pillelu*, and the interpretation I have given of it. St. Jerome takes the word in the ſenſe of *propitiating*, and renders it, inſtead of *exorabunt Deum, exorari poteſt Deus:* changing the Hebrew phraſe according to his cuſtom, for the ſake of the Latinity, or to make the ſenſe appear more plain. It is well known, that all the judgments with this people, as they were to be pronounced according to the divine law, were therefore conſidered as God's judgments.

As for the word *pelilim*, there is but one place that I know of, where it has the appearance of being uſed in a ſenſe of authority; and that is, Exod. xxi. 22. *If men ſtrive, and hurt a woman with child, ſo that her fruit depart from her, and yet no miſchief follow: he ſhall be ſurely puniſhed, according as the woman's huſband ſhall lay upon him, ve-nathan bip-pelilim—and he ſhall pay as the* judges *determine.* So the tranſlation——

Whereas, had judges in a proper ſenſe been meant, the word *ſhophetim* had certainly been uſed. But here is no point of law to be debated or determined: only the damages to be eſtimated betwixt the offender and the husband; for which two honeſt neighbours either choſen by the parties or appointed by the judge, were very ſufficient. Here then, *nathan bip-pelilim*, means, *he ſhall give, or pay, as the arbitri, or arbitrators,* (I ſuppoſe the difference is not great) *ſhall award——quantum arbitri judicaverint*, as the Latin

Vulgate well explains it; and ſo this falls in with that ſenſe which I had given above, as the laſt in the firſt branch or line of ſignifications.

I have but one text more to examine; and that, (I believe) if any, will ſet us right.

Iſa. xxviii. 7. We have the word *pelilijah*; which, according to the genius of the Hebrew, muſt ſignify the act or office (whatever that may be) of the *pelilim*. This is the only place where the word occurs: and therefore let us ſee whether from this exact writer we may not learn the true ſenſe of it. In deſcribing the great corruptions of the Jewiſh people he gives this flagrant inſtance amongſt others; *the prieſt and the prophet have erred through ſtrong drink, they are ſwallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through ſtrong drink: they err in viſion, they ſtumble in judgment.*

So our tranſlators after others——Where to err in viſion, is the charge againſt the *prophet*; and to ſtumble in judgment, is to be underſtood of the *prieſt*. But the word here tranſlated *judgment* is not *miſhpat* (the proper word for this purpoſe uſed perhaps an hundred times throughout the Bible) but *pelilijah*; a word (as I ſaid) which never occurs but this once: and can we ſuppoſe the prophet would uſe it inſtead of *miſhpat*, if he meant the ſame which *miſhpat* ſignifies? No certainly. But there was another branch of the prieſt's office, beſide their judging controverſies (which they did in certain caſes) for which a more apt word than this before us could not have been found in all the Hebrew tongue: and that was, the giving their opinion in any matter of law about which the people ſhould conſult them; or in ſhort, *reſolving caſes of conſcience.*

For as *the prieſt's lips were to keep knowledge, and the people were to ſeek the law at their mouth* (Malac. ii. 7.) and as the ritual laws more eſpecially were ſome of them attended with great nicety in the obſervance of them; it is obvious to perceive that the people would have frequent occaſions to reſort to their prieſts for direction, and ſatisfaction of their doubts.

And this was one reaſon of that wiſe eſtabliſhment, which inſtead of allotting to the tribe of Levi a portion of the land of Canaan by themſelves, gave them cities and a ſettlement in the midſt of every other tribe, that ſo they might be always near at hand to be conſulted. Which as it obliged them to the daily ſtudy of the law; ſo (by the way) it gives us an aſſurance from the very nature of the thing, that as the copies of the law muſt have been numerous, one at leaſt in every city of the Levites for the uſe of their prieſts and judges; it is morally impoſſible that all theſe books ſhould have periſhed, ſo as for every copy to be loſt, in any period of the Jewiſh ſtate whatever—which is the extravagant aſſertion of ſome men, built on weak and inſufficient grounds.

But the text of Iſaiah, which we are now conſidering, ſeems plainly to refer to that remarkable prohibition laid upon the prieſts the ſons of Aaron,

Levit.

Levit. x. 9—11. in the following words, *Do not drink wine nor ſtrong drink, thou, nor thy ſons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation; leſt ye die. It ſhall be a ſtatute for ever throughout your generations: and that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean.* It follows, *and that ye may teach the children of Iſrael all the ſtatutes which the Lord hath ſpoken unto them by the hand of Moſes.*

As guides and inſtructors of the people then, they are forbidden by this law even to taſte wine, as ſome have thought, when they entered into the tabernacle of the congregation: and much more therefore all exceſs of wine upon this and other occaſions. And it is with the breach of this command that Iſaiah here charges ſome of the prieſts of his time: that they were too much given to wine, and thereby diſqualified themſelves for the performing this very uſeful branch of their Office, the reſolving of their people's doubts when they conſulted them.

There is a paſſage in Ezekiel, where theſe two branches of the prieſtly office, their reſolving of caſes and judging of controverſies, are put together; and the prohibition of drinking wine likewiſe mentioned but two verſes before. Ezek. xliv. 23, 24. "They (the prieſts) ſhall teach my people the "difference between the holy and prophane, and cauſe men to diſcern be-"tween the unclean and the clean. And in controverſy they ſhall ſtand "in judgment, and they ſhall judge it according to my judgments."

Here, when a controverſy at law is ſpoken of, we have the words *miſhpat* and *ſhaphat*, which properly import judicature. And had the prophet Iſaiah therefore meant this part of the prieſtly office in the paſſage we have been conſidering, he would certainly have expreſſed it by the ſame word. But as he plainly meant the other, I muſt inſiſt upon it again, that he could not have found a more apt or more expreſſive word for it in all the Hebrew language than this which he has uſed.

If any one after all ſhould chuſe to ſay, that *pelilijah* may here mean *arbitration*; as probably their prieſts were often choſen upon occaſion to arbitrate differences among the people: I may allow it without any manner of detriment to the argument I am upon. For this is one ſenſe to which the word extends; but differs much from an authoritative judging and puniſhing of crimes.

The reader has been tired (I doubt) with ſo long a diſquiſition about the meaning of a word. But when I differ from the generality of interpreters, and eſpecially our own tranſlators, (which I neither take a pride nor pleaſure in the doing of, for it rather gives me pain:) I think myſelf obliged to give a clear and a ſufficient reaſon for ſo doing.

I confeſs, I had another view in it likewiſe: which was, as far as the occaſion made it proper, and the ſifting of a word would carry me, to do juſtice to the ſacred writers, and to the language wherein they wrote. Their

ſtyle, if thoroughly conſidered, will appear far from being ambiguous or uncertain, as ſome have repreſented it. And if things appear oftentimes dark and doubtful to us in the holy Scriptures; it is but modeſty and juſtice to believe, that the defect is rather in ourſelves.

I hope I have ſaid enough to ſatisfy Mr. Heath, that the ſenſe which Schultens gave to the word *pelili*, is by no means forced, but natural: and that were it otherwiſe, yet no argument can be drawn from this paſſage againſt the great antiquity of the book of Job.

But ſince I am engaged with this learned gentleman upon this ſubject; I ſhall take leave to point out a miſtake in his Preface, p. 8. where he argues that the writer of the book of Job muſt have been "*by nation a Jew*," from the name Jehovah there uſed, "*known only* (as he ſays) "*to that nation.*"

Now I think it appears from the book of Geneſis, that this great name was known long before that nation had a being, and even from the beginning. Eve herſelf uſes this name of God expreſsly upon occaſion of the birth of her firſt ſon. Gen. iv. 1. "I have gotten a man" (ſays ſhe) "*eth* "*Jehovah*," *with Jehovah*, meaning with his bleſſing probably; many other inſtances might be given.

There is one obſcure text indeed, which hath been often brought in proof of what Mr. H—— ſuggeſts, *viz.* Exod. vi. 3. God there ſays to Moſes, "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Iſaac, and unto Jacob by (the name of) "God Almighty: but by my name Jehovah was I not known unto "them."

If we take the word *known*, here, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, it contradicts the hiſtory in many places: and to ſet up one text againſt an hundred, would be a very hazardous way of interpreting Scripture.

But what then can be the meaning of this laſt clauſe, "By my name "Jehovah was I not *known* unto them?" Plainly this; by my name Jehovah was I not *diſtinguiſhed.*

It is evident from the foregoing hiſtory, that the true God was known to his true worſhippers by this and many other names; ſuch as, (to give them in the Hebrew) *El*, *Elohim*, *Adonai*, *Jehovah*, *Jehovah Elohim*, *El yelion (the high God) El yolam (the everlaſting God)* and as here in this text, *El Shaddai*, *God Almighty*. But by none of theſe was he known as his *one peculiar name*, a name which he had *appropriated* to himſelf in preference to the others, and by which he now declares he would be diſtinguiſhed for the time to come. "Wherefore ſay to the children of Iſrael, *Ani Jehovah*, *I am* "*Jehovah*; and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyp- "tians; and I will rid you out of their Bondage; and I will redeem you "with a ſtretched out arm and with great judgments. And I will take "you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and ye ſhall know, "that I Jehovah am your God, which bringeth you out from under the

"burdens

" burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land con-
" cerning the which I did ſwear to give it to Abraham, to Iſaac, and to
" Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am Jehovah." Exod. vi. 6, 7, 8.

Of all the names of God this ſeems to be the moſt expreſſive of his eſſence, as it denotes the one eternal ſelf-exiſtent Being, from whom all things derive their being, and on whom they muſt depend. And no time could be more ſeaſonable for God to give himſelf ſuch a name as this, than whenhe was about to take this little nation for his own peculiar people, and to plant and to preſerve amongſt them the worſhip of himſelf alone, in oppoſition to the polytheiſm and idolatry of the nations all around them. For if any thing could preſerve them from worſhipping the little ſubordinate deities of the Heathen nations, it muſt be the conſideration of what this name imported: that the God they were to worſhip, and who had choſen them for his people, was the one ſupreme and ſelf-exiſtent Being, the Creator and Governor of the univerſe; who had no equal, nor would ſuffer any rival.

Accordingly this was the name with which Moſes was ſent to this people, and to Pharaoh: the name which Pharaoh ſlighted (Exod. v. 2.) " Who
" is Jehovah that I ſhould obey his voice?" And the name by which Moſes wrought ſuch wonders; and baffled all the boaſted arts of their magicians (ſhall we ſay?) or the powers of the falſe gods they worſhipped. For
" Jehovah ſhewed himſelf to be greater than all their gods; and wherein
" they dealt proudly he was above them." Exod. xviii. 11.

This then was that great name, known to their fathers amongſt other names, but by which having delivered them from the Egyptian bondage the God of the Hebrews was to be diſtinguiſhed for the future. And therefore the firſt laws that were given them from Mount Sinai are prefaced with this name to give them their proper weight of authority, *Ani Jehovah Eloheca, I am Jehovah thy God.* And we find ſeveral particular laws afterwards enforced with the ſame ſanction, You ſhall obſerve to do ſo and ſo, *Ani Jehovah.* The deſign of that dreadful roll of threatenings ſet before them Deut. xxviii. is thus expreſſed at verſe the 58th. " That thou mayeſt fear
" this glorious and fearful name Jehovah thy God." And ſo the prophets, when they would recall them from idolatry; uſually put them in mind of this great name by which the true God had vouchſafed to call himſelf. As if the *Shemagn Jiſrael*, (which the Jews repeat ſo often and with ſuch devotion) were to be always ſounding in their ears, " Hear O Iſrael, Jehovah
" our God is one Jehovah," *&c.* Deut. vi. 4.

It is impoſſible to derive this name from any other root, than that which ſignifies *to be:* nor do any of the commentators (that I know of) attempt it. The firſt therefore and the moſt natural idea it conveys is that of *the ſelf-exiſtent Being.* If we refer it to the Hiphil conjugation which ſignifies

to

to make to be; it then very aptly denotes the great *Creator of the Univerſe.* If with Le Clerc we underſtand it to mean one who *makes to be* (that is, fulfils) *what he had promiſed or foretold* *: then nothing can be more natural than to refer it to him in whom all the divine promiſes and predictions centre. And ſo in this one Word ſeems to have been wrapped up the whole myſtery of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian diſpenſations. It is certain that the one cannot be underſtood, but by its relation and connection with the other. If we conſider the Jewiſh diſpenſation as preparatory to the Chriſtian; every difficulty in a manner, every phænomenon in the *Old Teſtament* is ſolved. God's extreme jealouſy over this little nation; his ſeverity in certain caſes; his amazing condeſcenſion to their rude capacities and apprehenſions; the law, the ritual, the miracles, the prophecies; all the arts of the divine government over his wayward and refractory people (for it is to be remembered that he governs men as men, or free agents) appear wonderful indeed, but rational, conſiſtent, wiſe, juſt, gracious, very intelligible, and admirable. Take it in any other View, or in that narrow ſelfiſh one wherein the Jews are fond of underſtanding it, as a hiſtory of the partial regards ſhewn by the maker of the univerſe for one family or people: the whole appears dark, intricate, ſtrange, unintelligible, and unaccountable.

But none can be at a loſs for the deſign, who reads the Scriptures with attention.

This people are expreſsly told by Moſes, by the prophets; that it was not for *their* righteouſneſs, nor for *their* ſakes, that God had given them the land of Canaan, or vouchſafed them ſo many wonderful deliverances; for they were a ſtiff-necked and rebellious people: but for his *own* ſake, and his great name's ſake; (meaning, no doubt, this name by which the ſupreme Being is ſo happily expreſſed) and to carry on the deſigns of his providence.

It is very obſervable, that the Jews were never in a better diſpoſition, more religious or obedient to the Law of God, both King and People (for any thing that appears) than in the reign of Hezekiah; when they were ſo miraculouſly preſerved from the deſtruction that threatened them by the proud king of Aſſyria. And yet God does not tell them that he would deliver them from this imminent danger for *their* ſakes; but "I will defend "this city (Jeruſalem) to ſave it for my *own* ſake, and for my ſervant Da-"vid's ſake" (Iſa. xxxvii. 35) "for his own ſake"—to let the haughty Aſſyrian know whom he had blaſphemed—"and for his ſervant David's "ſake"—that is, plainly, for the ſake of the Meſſiah—This muſt be the meaning, if we ſuffer one prophet to explain another. For neither David's perſon, who had been dead three hundred years; nor yet his family or poſterity at large; or Hezekiah who was then upon the throne; can ſo properly be meant here; as that one eminent branch of it, to whom God by his

* Eum qui facit ut ſit quod futuram dixit. *Le Clerc on Exod.* iii. xv.

other

other prophets gives the name of *David*, and *my ſervant David*, in the very expreſſion here uſed: Thus Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24. "And I will ſet up one "ſhepherd over them, and he ſhall feed them, even my ſervant David; he "ſhall feed them, and he ſhall be their ſhepherd. And I Jehovah will be "their God"—And again, Ch. xxxvii. 24. "And David my ſervant ſhall "be king over them: and they ſhall all have one ſhepherd."

So Jeremiah, Ch. xxx. 9. "And they ſhall ſerve Jehovah their God, "and David their King, whom I will raiſe up unto them." And the prophet Hoſea, Chap. iii. 4, 5. a prophecy the more remarkable, as it plainly points at ſome future converſion of the Jews or Iſraelites, (happy for them, if the time were come) when the children of Iſrael, after "abiding many "days without a king, and without a prince, and without a ſacrifice, *&c.* "—ſhall return and ſeek Jehovah their God, and David their king; and "ſhall fear Jehovah and his goodneſs in the latter days."

Whether we pronounce this awful name aright, is a very queſtionable point. For they who ſhould have directed us to the pronunciation had, through a ſuperſtitious fear or ſome other reaſon, ſo long omitted it, that it is now quite loſt with them: and they never attempt to utter this name of God, but uſe another inſtead of it. Why we ſhould do the ſame I know not: or why they ſhould condemn us for attempting to utter a name, which God himſelf gave to be uttered. And which whether we pronounce exactly right or not, muſt certainly be nearer to the right than that which they have ſubſtituted in the place of it, without any competent authority, for any thing that appears.

It is well that they have left it in the Hebrew text, where it appears a thouſand, and perhaps a thouſand times. And it is to be hoped, that this all wiſe and gracious Being, who is high above all conception, will not be offended with us though we ſhould liſp in the pronouncing of his name; if ſo be that we always ſpeak, and think of him with reverence.

But to return —— If any one doubts whether the verb *jadagn*, *to know*, be ever uſed in Scripture in this reſtrained ſenſe of a *diſtinguiſhing knowledge*, I need only point out to him, Amos iii. 2. Where God ſays "You only "have I *known* of all the families of the earth,"——that is, you only have I *diſtinguiſhed*; you only have I known "as my peculiar people. It follows, therefore will I puniſh you for your iniquities"——in a diſtinguiſhing and exemplary manner.

We find the ſame ſtyle uſed in the *New Teſtament*. "If any man love God, (ſaith St. Paul, 1 Cor. viii. 3. οὗτος ἔγνωσται ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, "the ſame is *known* of him"—known ſo as to be diſtinguiſhed and rewarded.

And ſo in the paſſage now before us, "By my name Jehovah was I not "*known*," may very naturally ſignify, by my name Jehovah was I not *diſtinguiſhed*—I was not known by it as my proper and peculiar name, and as

as I now intend to be for the future — "This ſhall be my name for ever, "and this my memorial unto all generations" Exod. iii. 15.

This gives ſo apt and eaſy a ſenſe to the text, that one would wonder any one ſhould overlook it.

If this great name, then, was known from the beginning of the world; known to Abraham in particular, (for God when he manifeſted himſelf to him calls himſelf by this name, and Abraham addreſſes him by the ſame name; builds alters here and there, and worſhips or invokes *Be-ſhem* Jehovah, by this name) then certainly it could not be unknown to Job, a deſcendant of Abraham, and well inſtructed in the faith or religion of Abraham, of which he hath given us in this book the nobleſt proofs.

And why not inſtructed in his language too? Can we ſuppoſe that Abraham's poſterity by Iſhmael; by his wife Keturah, by Eſau; who peopled ſeveral diſtricts of Arabia, and would naturally preſerve a correſpondence with each other; could poſſibly forget their mother tongue in four or five generations? If learned men can produce any proof of Fact that they did ſo, they will ſay ſomething: but till then, it will be unreaſonable to ſuppoſe it. Or even to ſuppoſe that the language could receive any conſiderable alterations in ſo ſhort a time.

And therefore I muſt ſtill take leave to think, that Job, though an Arabian, might nevertheleſs be the writer of this Hebrew book.

Nay, I think, a probable Argument may be drawn, that an Arabian and not an inhabitant of Judea was the writer of it, from Job. xxxvii. 22. compared with Prov. xxv. 23. In the former text Elihu ſays, "Fair weather "cometh out of the North": but in the latter, Solomon tells us, that "a north wind bringeth forth rain." For this is the true rendring of *Ruach tzaphon techolel geſhem.*

Though theſe aſſertions contradict each other, they are both exactly true as underſtood of the two different countries Arabia and Judæa, and are ſuited to their reſpective ſituations. For in Arabia the North-wind blew over a long tract of dry land, and therefore uſually brought dry weather; whereas in Judæa, the North-wind (in which name were included all the winds betwixt the North and North-weſt) blew from the Mediterranean ſea, and therefore commonly brought rain.

Now if the writer of the book of Job was a Jew, he muſt have been acquainted with this curious piece of natural hiſtory, this difference in the weather in Arabia from what it was in his own country. A piece of knowledge we may juſtly ſcruple to allow to an imaginary perſon, of whoſe exiſtence we have no proof.

Nay we have the more reaſon not to allow it to this ſuppoſed Jew, becauſe our own tranſlators, and many others, who have obſerved the wind from the North to be commonly a dry wind in their own countries, and not being

being aware of the difference which a different ſituation makes; have rendered this proverb of Solomon; inſtead of, "The North-wind bringeth "forth rain, and an angry countenance private obloquy," (which is the natural ſenſe) quite contrary, "The North-wind driveth away rain; ſo "doth an angry countenance a back-biting tongue."

But the word *techolel* can never ſignify *to drive away*; or if it did, how ſhould an angry countenance drive away what it could have no influence upon, the *laſhon ſather*, *hidden tongue*, as the Hebrew is? On the other hand, the frowns of an angry man will naturally provoke people to give a looſe to their tongues, when they are out of his ſight and hearing: and this is the true meaning of the proverb.

But whoever deſires farther ſatisfaction upon this text, may conſult Le Clerc:—where they will find a whole column, and more, employed to explain it. And yet this learned Commentator would not infer from it as I do, a kind of proof, (and ſure a ſlender proof may ſuffice in this caſe) that the writer of the book of Job was no inhabitant of Judæa.

Having named Monſieur Le Clerc, I muſt now proceed to apologize for the freedom with which I have treated him throughout my book.

This hath been objected to me by an eminent writer, a profeſſed admirer of this celebrated author, whoſe words I ſhall produce after ſaying ſomewhat in behalf of myſelf. For as few ſtand alone in their way of thinking, I make no doubt but there are others to whom my treatment of Le Clerc may ſeem ſevere: as pointing out the miſtakes of an author with freedom will always carry this appearance to thoſe who have entertained a partial fondneſs for him.

To abate a little of this partiality therefore, I find myſelf under a neceſſity of ſpeaking my ſentiments yet more freely of this learned man (I mean, as a commentator of the holy Scriptures, for I conſider him in no other view) before I proceed to defend myſelf from the particular charge brought againſt me.

I am very ready to acknowledge, that Le Clerc was a general ſcholar; vaſtly ſtudious and laborious; and of a genius turned for criticiſm: and in all theſe reſpects excellently qualified for an interpreter of Scripture, had he come to it with leſs fondneſs for ſome favourite notions, and had he applied himſelf ſteadily and cloſely to it. But it is well known what a variety of Bibliotheques and other books he was employed either in the writing of, or publiſhing; which muſt have kept him, perhaps for years together, from any ſteadineſs of application to the great work he had undertaken (and which was enough in all reaſon to take up half the life of any one man) *A new Tranſlation, Paraphraſe and Commentary on the whole Scriptures of the Old Teſtament*. In fact we find that the many other works wherein he was engaged, kept the world in expectation, from the publiſhing the firſt book

of theſe commentaries to the laſt, for no leſs than eight and thirty years. For though the book of Geneſis was publiſhed in 1693, and two years after the whole Pentateuch: it was ſtill thirteen years before the next volume on the hiſtorical books came out; and there too the paraphraſe was dropped (though as uſeful a part as any, but perhaps the niceſt and moſt difficult) and only a tranſlation with a commentary given. And it was three and twenty years more (*viz.* 1731) before his imperfect work on the poetical and prophetical Books was publiſhed, when he was now reduced, in a manner, to a ſtate of childhood; and had unfortunately left theſe books for the laſt, which are by far the moſt difficult, and would have demanded all the vigour of his younger years.

So little did this celebrated critic regard his own good rules for ſtudy. For in his *Ars Critica* he cautions againſt mixing ſtudies of a different kind: and adviſes that whoever would underſtand a book well, ſhould read and ſtudy it without interruption, till he became a perfect maſter of his author's ſtyle and ſubject: which he will never be (ſays he) by taking up the book for a while, and then dropping it again, and ſo reſuming it by fits and ſtarts; as experience ſhews.* How then could he think, that he ſhould be able to put out a work of this kind without many imperfections in it; if he made it only a work by the by.

There is another fault of Le Clerc's, which (with the leave of his admirers) I muſt inſiſt on. He carried his notion of the ambiguity and uncertainty of the Hebrew language and the ſtyle of Scripture to an extreme: ſo that in paſſages which appeared to contradict an opinion he was fond of, there was nothing plain enough or preciſe enough for him. I have given ſeveral inſtances, and could have given many more, of this ill-placed heſitancy. Which whatever ſhew of modeſty it may put on, is in reality as much a vice in literature, as it is to be too dogmatical or aſſuming. And it is no uncommon thing to ſee both extremes united (like the avarice and prodigality of a Cataline as deſcribed by Salluſt) in one and the ſame character—To put us off with a *non liquit* where the ſenſe is plain and the conſtruction regular; and this in maintenance of a paradoxical opinion highly improbable in itſelf, and diſallowed by a great majority at leaſt, if not the generality of divines both Jewiſh and Chriſtian; inconſiſtent with the general drift or tenour of the Scriptures, as well as with numerous texts of Scripture taken in their moſt natural and obvious ſenſe (for ſuch was the point I was diſputing with him) is a conduct not to be defended.

* *Ars Crit.* p. 1. Cap. v. Sect. 3. Illa nimium interrupta lectio faſtidium parit, quo fit ut tandem præ tedio eos ſcriptores deponamus; quos ſi continuò, et ſine interpellatione legiſſemus avide evolviſſemus. Huc etiam accedit, quod cum quiſque ſcriptor ſuum habeat characterem, ſuamque eloquutionem, opus ſit tempore et perpetua lectione ut ei adſuefiamus. Hoc enim fieri nequit ſubinde depoſito et in manus denuo ſumpto ſcriptore; quod experientia nos docuit, et omnes, quicumque idem tentabunt, docebit.

I am perſuaded no one had it leſs in his intention than Le Clerc to give advantage to the Romiſh cauſe. And yet were the Scriptures ſo obſcure, ambiguous, and uncertain as he ſometimes repreſents them; what a temptation or excuſe would here be to look out for another rule of faith, a ſubſidiary one at leaſt!

He was himſelf, I believe, a ſincere Chriſtian: and yet what a ſtumbling-block did he lay in the way of the credulous and half-learned among the adverſaries of chriſtianity, by this unhappy treatment of the Scripture language.

"It is highly probable", ſays one of theſe gentlemen (the mouth of a ſociety of gentlemen, if we may believe his title-page) who ſeems to have known little of the Hebrew, but what he gueſſed at by dipping into Le Clerc, "that the original biblical Hebrew never was any intelligible "language, or capable of being tranſlated with any juſtneſs or certainty, "into any other language. And whoever will read the learned Mr. "Le Clerc's diſſertations upon the Hebrew tongue, and manner of inter-"preting theſe writings, will hardly avoid being of this opinion."

He proceeds, for fear we ſhould miſtake him, to explain himſelf further.

"It ſeems indeed moſt probable to us that the biblical Hebrew never was "any national living language, articulated by vowels, diſtinguiſhed by the "neceſſary conjunctions, præpoſitions, adverbs, perſons, and tenſes, ſo as "to make it a common intelligible way of ſpeaking. It ſeems rather to have "been originally contrived as a cypher, intended to be read and under-"ſtood only by the prieſts" *. Yea! here is the great grievance——Take away theſe prieſts; for they are cyphers too (if I may be ſuffered to play upon the word) nay worſe than cyphers in the opinion of theſe gentlemen: for they do all the miſchief——

I am far from deſiring to load Le Clerc with the follies and extravagancies of theſe men; to which he may have given occaſion unawares, but for which themſelves are anſwerable. Nevertheleſs I could heartily wiſh, that this popular writer had not ſaid ſo many diſparaging things of that language wherein the divine oracles are conveyed to us: and which, though, like others, it has its ambiguities and anomalies (for where is one that has not?) is nevertheleſs in the main a regular and a beautiful language; like the works of God, at leaſt in its original contrivance, wonderfully ſimple and yet artificial; and very intelligible to thoſe who will be at the pains to ſtudy it. And as we have now, to facilitate this ſtudy, a Hebrew Concordance adapted to the Engliſh Bible; a great and uſeful work, which I mention with pleaſure therefore upon this occaſion: I am in hopes that (through the divine bleſſing) it may bring both the Hebrew and the Bible into a little more repute with us, and lead the ſober and the ſtudious to examine for themſelves.

* Sacerdotiſm diſplayed, p. 62.

But to return to Le Clerc. What I would ſay is this, that it is no wonder, if one who had entertained ſuch a notion of the imperfection of the Hebrew tongue, and who moreover could not, or would not allow himſelf ſufficient leiſure for the ſtudy of thoſe ſacred books he had undertaken to explain, ſhould be guilty of numerous miſtakes in his interpreting them; at the ſame time that I allow him to have ſhewn a great ſagacity in many places; for I am far from envying him his due praiſe. In the paſſage juſt now cited from the book of Proverbs, we are beholden to his ſkill in natural hiſtory or philoſophy, as well as in the Hebrew, for the right interpretation of it. But this and a thouſand other proofs of his ſkill can never raiſe him to the infallible chair, if there be any ſuch in criticiſm; nor make every thing he touches paſs for gold. If therefore men will reſt implicitly in the ſenſe of this, or any other commentator, from an opinion they have entertained of his learning and his judgment, they will unavoidably eſpouſe his errors: and how ſhall we do to ſet them right, but by ſhewing them the faults of him whom they have choſen for their maſter?

The candid reader will ſee the reaſon I had for this long preamble, and excuſe it; when he has peruſed what I am now going to lay before him, *viz.* a note of the reverend Dr. Law, archdeacon of Carliſle, *&c.* in the laſt edition of his conſiderations on the Theory of Religion, p. 69. Where after a long quotation from *Le Clerc's Commentary on Job*, Ch. xix. he proceeds thus ——"Whoever is diſpoſed to weigh theſe reaſons fairly, may find them "more at large in his (Le Clerc's) notes: and will perhaps ſee ſmall ground "to ſuppoſe with the learned author of *Crit. Diſſ.* p. 216. that when he "wrote them he had begun to loſe his wits. I muſt confeſs, I am ſorry to "obſerve ſo candid a writer as Mr. P. betraying the ſame contempt of that "great man, (whoſe comments, I freely own, give me the moſt inſtruction, "and to whom, notwithſtanding his miſtakes, I apprehend the learned world "is infinitely obliged) as too many of our countrymen have done whenever "they mentioned him, and hope I ſhall be excuſed for taking notice of "what ſeemed not the moſt proper method of deſtroying the authority of "that learned and ingenious foreigner (whoſe writings are the moſt effectual "guard againſt this way of judging, and thereby probably have given ſo "great offence to ſome amongſt us) but rather an inſult on the memory of "one, who would not have returned the like had he been able to defend "himſelf; and which treatment was by no means neceſſary to recommend "this gentleman's performance; for which (notwithſtanding ſome exceptionable paſſages, particularly that in the ſame ſection, p. 225. of the "Gentile nations being left for ever in the ſtate of death: a doctrine which "to me appears more harſh than any that has been advanced by poor "Le Clerc) I take the preſent opportunity of paying him my moſt ſincere "acknowledgments,"——*&c.*

Thus

Thus it is that the learned archdeacon has been pleaſed to reprimand me—with ſuch a mixture of chiding and compliment, that had it come from my own archdeacon, who has ſome authority over me, and for whom I have a reſpect, I think I ſhould not have taken it very kindly of him.

Let me begin with the exceptionable paſſage here produced, and cenſured for its harſhneſs, *viz.* of the "Gentile nations left for ever in the ſtate of "death". My words are theſe, p. 225, 4to. "I freely own I can make "no ſenſe of this paſſage any other way, than by underſtanding the word "*ham-methim*, the dead, as intended to characteriſe the Gentile nations, who "having no part in God's covenant of redemption, but being eſtranged "from him by their idolatries and wickedneſs, were to be left for ever in the "ſtate of death, ſo as never more to riſe to happineſs at leaſt; whilſt God's "people on the other hand hoped for a joyful reſurrection and a future "ſtate of bleſſedneſs, wherein they ſhould praiſe God for ever, in the moſt "extenſive ſenſe of that phraſe."

The learned writer, before he had condemned this paſſage for its harſhneſs, ſhould have recollected whether the ſame charge would not lie againſt that account which St. Paul gives of the Gentile nations, Epheſ. ii. 12. For the apoſtle has expreſſed himſelf in terms that are full as ſtrong as mine. "At that time (ſays he, that is, the time when ye were yet Gentiles, v. 11.) "ye were without Chriſt, being aliens from the common-"wealth of Iſrael, and ſtrangers from the covenants of promiſe, having no "hope, and without God in the world."

Here ſeems to be juſt the ſame diſtinction made as mine, and upon the very ſame ground: ſo that my words can ſtand in need of no further juſtification. However Dr. Law might have obſerved, if he had not been too haſty in his cenſure, that I had expreſſed myſelf with ſome caution too; and ſuppoſed theſe Gentile nations "eſtranged from God both by their idola-"tries and *wickedneſs*." I had no intention to ſet any other limits to the mercy of God, than thoſe which he himſelf hath ſet; or to exclude from it particular perſons of the Heathen world, who under all their diſadvantages might nevertheleſs have been eminent for their virtue, and ſome of them have entertained very honourable notions of the ſupreme Being. But when we ſpeak of nations, or people, and their different ſtates; I apprehend, it is to be underſtood of the generality; without regard to the particular exceptions, which the great Creator of us all, and he alone, is qualified to make, and will make, no doubt, agreeably to his own unerring wiſdom and goodneſs.

As to the diſtinction of *ham-methim* and *ha-chajim*, or the *living* and the *dead*, as applied to perſons ſubſiſting in another ſtate; which was the notion I was ſpeaking of; (for, by the way, I was not here advancing any opinion of my own, but enquiring into the belief of the ancient Jews concerning a

future

future ſtate) if any one doubts whether there be a ſufficient ground for ſuch a diſtinction in ſcripture; I think I could produce other texts to corroborate the proof I had given from Pſ. 115.

I ſhall detain the reader but with one or two taken from a book where one would leaſt of all expect to find them, according to the notion ſome have entertained of that book; I mean, the Eccleſiaſtes. Thus Ch. ix. 4. The wiſe man is there deploring the wickedneſs of his own times, ariſing in a great meaſure from men's perverſe reaſoning about the ways of providence: becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not executed ſpeedily: and "becauſe "all things come alike to all. This is an evil (ſays he, v. 3.) among all "things that are done under the ſun, that there is one event unto all: yea "alſo the heart of the ſons of men is full of evil, and madneſs is in their "heart while they live, and after that (they go) to the dead," *el hamethim.*

It follows, *ci mi aſher jechubbar el col ha-chajim jeſh bittachon?* "For who "is there that hopes he ſhall be aſſociated to all the living?" (that is, after "death) nay but a living dog (ſay they) is better than a dead lion. For "the living know that they ſhall die, but the dead know not any thing." And ſo he goes on in his uſual way, to repreſent the wrong reaſonings of theſe men (if we may call it reaſoning) for ſeveral verſes together, along to v. 10 incluſive; "whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; "for there is no work nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in *Sheol*, "whither thou art going."

For this is a peculiarity in this book of Solomon, that there is more of the Mimeſis in it than in any other book of Scripture; as well as longer periods, and a thread of diſcourſe not eaſily traced, nor to be underſtood without much attention.

But whoever conſiders cloſely this whole paſſage from v. 4 to 10. will ſee that it is a deſcription of the ſoft and the voluptuous life; of ſuch as believed a Deity indeed, but (like Epicurus) imagined him to be as ſoft and idle as themſelves; and that he had given them this preſent life merely that they might enjoy it to the full, and catch at every object of delight within their reach, and even as far as their might or power would bear them out: for that there was nothing after this life either to be hoped or feared. This is the plain drift or purport of theſe ſix verſes.

As to the conſtruction I have given to v. 4. I think I could eaſily juſtify it to the Hebræan reader. I ſee no other conſtruction indeed that is natural and regular, and that carries a good ſenſe with it, beſide this, *Ci mi aſher jechubbar el col ha-chajim jeſh (lo) bittachon? Nam quis eſt cui ſit ſpes ſe aſſociatum iri ad omnes viventes? For who is there that has any hope or truſt that he ſhall be aſſociated to all the living?* that is to the general aſſembly of them, the πανηγυρει, if I may borrow a word from St. Paul, Heb. xii. 23.

If

If the pronoun *lo*, *ei*, be not underſtood between *jeſh* and *bittachon*, the ל put before *mi* (and this is frequently underſtood) gives the ſame ſenſe, and is exactly according to the Hebrew idiom *Ci lemi jeſh bittachon aſher jechubbar el col ha-chajim?* There is a *Keri* and a *Cetib* here indeed, or a various lection, and the *Cetib* is *jebuchar* not *jechubbar*. But the difference is only this, whether we ſay *aſſociatum iri*, or *cooptatum iri*, which comes to the ſame thing.

Dr. Law will not find this interpretation in Le Clerc, nor perhaps in any other of the commentators: and yet it is likely enough to be the right, for all that; for it is the grammatical one.

As for what follows, *Ci le-celeb chai hu tob min ha-arjeh hameth. Quinimô canis vivus, &c.* "Nay but a living dog is better than a dead lion"—the very turn of this ſentence ſhews it to be proverbial; and a wicked ſaying got into the mouth of ſome who had thrown off all regard to fame, as well as all belief of another life: for the import of it is plainly this, that "it is "better to live with ſhame, than to die with honour."

This, ſurely, could never be the ſentiment of Solomon himſelf, who had before told us, (ch. vii. 1.) that, "a good name is better than precious "ointment; and the day of death, (to one who has acquired it) better "than the day of his birth." We muſt conclude it therefore to be a ſhameleſs vulgar ſaying got into the mouths of the libertines of thoſe days: and as it was notoriouſly known to be ſo, there was no need to preface it with a *they ſay*, which is often omitted in works of this kind, and that with elegance. So St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 32.) "let us eat and drink" (without adding, as ſays the Epicure) "for to-morrow we die." And I chuſe this inſtance the rather, becauſe the ſpeech here put into the mouth of the libertine by Solomon for ſix verſes together is ſo very like it; that had it not been extant for a thouſand years before, one might have taken it for a ſort of paraphraſe upon this Epicurean text in St. Paul. But there were, and are, and will be men of this way of thinking in all times: and theſe words of St. Paul are but borrowed from the prophet Iſaiah, ch. xxii. 13. And he who would ſee this paſſage in Eccleſiaſtes further paraphraſed (if I may ſo ſpeak) may find it very beautifully done in the book of Wiſdom, Ch. ii. v. 1.—"For the ungodly ſaid, reaſoning with themſelves, but not aright, our life "is ſhort and tedious, and in the death of a man there is no remedy," *&c.* If any one at his leiſure will compare this paſſage in the book of Wiſdom, Ch. ii. from v. 1 to 11. with Eccleſ. 9. from v. 5 to the 10th, he will find that the perſonated Solomon throws great light upon the true one.

Shall I give another paſſage from this book, in proof of the notion I am ſpeaking of? Let it be Eccleſ. vii. 12, 13. "Wiſdom is good with an in-"heritance, and (by it there is) "profit to them that ſee the ſun. For "wiſdom is a defence, and money is a defence: but the excellency of "know-

" knowledge, is, that wiſdom giveth life to them that have it." There needs no long comment upon theſe words. One who is but a little converſant in the books of Solomon muſt know what he means by wiſdom: And he tells us here, comparing wealth and wiſdom together, that though there be a great advantage ariſing from their union to ſuch as ſee the ſun, or live in this world; becauſe one is a defence, and the other a defence (and therefore both together muſt needs be a much greater) againſt the common evils of life: yet the ſuperior excellency of wiſdom conſiſts in this *Jechajeh beyaleha*, " It ſhall give life to its owners." If we can doubt what he means by *giving life*, let Solomon himſelf explain it, Prov. iii. 18. where he tells us that " wiſdom is a *tree of life* to them that lay hold of her." alluding, no doubt, to that tree of life in Paradiſe; whence Adam was excluded, " leſt he ſhould " eat and *live for ever*."

Here then is a plain evidence of this people's belief of another life; nay more of their hopes of a recovery of that life and immortality which had been forfeited by the firſt man's diſobedience; if they applied their hearts to wiſdom in the well-known Scripture-ſenſe of that word. For what other poſſible meaning can be put upon theſe texts compared? Nay is not the object of our Chriſtian hope deſcribed in juſt the ſame terms? Rev. ii. 7. " To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in " the midſt of the Paradiſe of God."

But now to return—Let us compare this ſaying of mine (of the Gentile nations, *&c.*) more harſh, it ſeems, than any thing that has been advanced by Le Clerc; with the favourite notion of that author, ſo often repeated in his commentaries, in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, that the Hebrews had no knowledge of a future ſtate. Were they entered into a ſolemn covenant with God then?—declared a holy people—ſtyled the ſons of God—with no other intent, but to teach them that they muſt expect their happineſs in this life; and to blind them againſt all other views and hopes? This ſeems harſh indeed——and too abſurd for any man who is not himſelf blinded by prejudice.

The learned archdeacon ſpeaks of other exceptionable paſſages in my book. He would have obliged me much, if he had pointed them out. It is no wonder if there be ſome errors; but there they muſt remain till made known to me: for it is a queſtion whether I ſhall find them out myſelf.

But let me now proceed to conſider what gave occaſion, to this whole note of Dr. Law's.

And here, I think, I have reaſon to complain, that this gentleman cites my words and cenſures them, as if they had related to that long paſſage he has produced from Le Clerc's commentary; or at leaſt to ſome part of it. Whereas whoever looks into my book and that commentary, will ſee that they relate to ſomething ſaid before, at the diſtance of two whole columns from

from this: and which I might ſay again, one would think no man in his wits could ſay. I there produced his own Latin words; and it is neceſſary to repeat them here; that ſo the reader may judge for himſelf.

Job xix. 25. Le Clerc tranſlates thus——*Novi ego liberatorem meum vivum, et poſthac fore ut in pulvere ſtet.* "I know that my deliverer liveth, and that "hereafter he ſhall ſtand in or upon the duſt." And having told us, that by the *deliverer* is meant *God:* he proceeds to comment thus. *Ait autem Jobus fore poſthac ut liberator in pulvere ſtet; quod perinde eſt ac eum victurum, κατ' ἀνθρωποπάθειαν, quia homines qui ſtant in pulvere vivunt; opponuntur enim iis qui in pulvere tecti ſunt, et in ſepulcro jacent.* In Engliſh thus——"Job ſays "that hereafter his deliverer ſhould ſtand upon the duſt; which is "the ſame thing as if he had ſaid that he ſhould be alive, according to a "known figure called an anthropopathia, becauſe men who ſtand upon the "duſt, live: for they are oppoſed to thoſe who are covered in the duſt, and "lie in the grave."

This is as cloſe a tranſlation as I can give the words; and the reaſoning here implied I had repreſented to be thus. "A man that ſtands upon the "duſt is alive (to be ſure) for he is not buried in the duſt: therefore when "it is ſaid of the Deity that he ſhall ſtand upon the duſt—the conſequence "is clear"—*viz.* that he is living, becauſe he is not dead and buried. Can any other conſequence be drawn, or any other ſenſe be put upon this paſſage? Will the learned Archdeacon vindicate it? can he ſay that it is not ſenſeleſs and abſurd to the laſt degree? And therefore I am ſtill ſurpriſed that it ſhould come from a man of ſo good underſtanding as Monſ. Le Clerc; unleſs it were after he had loſt his memory and underſtanding, being quite worn out by age and ſickneſs and hard ſtudy. For this it is well known was his caſe for ſome length of time before he died: And his Editor tells us ſomewhat of it in the Preface to this volume *. So much the more care therefore ſhould his editor have taken, who profeſſes himſelf the author's friend †, not to let ſo odd and ridiculous a paſſage to remain here, which one little blot might have effaced, and which could not without great negligence have been overlooked, as it ſtood by way of comment upon the moſt noted text, perhaps, in all the bible. The knowledge he had of his friend's utter incapacity to reviſe his own works, ſhould have engaged him, ſurely, ſince he undertook it, to beſtow the neceſſary pains about it: eſpecially where the ſubject was ſo intereſting and important, as that of a tranſlation and commentary on the books of Scripture. So that here it is, in reality, that the reflection falls at laſt; *viz.* on poor Le Clerc's anonymous friend *the Editor*, where I had placed it.

* Vivit equidem, ſed ita vivit ut nullum amplius laborem ſcribendi aut meditandi ferre queat.——*And juſt after*——Nihil itaque, proh dolor! ab illo in poſterum expectare debet reſpublica literaria.

† Lectori S. P. D. Amicus Auctoris.

" *Poor Le Clerc*"—ſays this gentleman in Italicks; with a true compaſſion for him, I make no doubt: but very ill-timed, if it was intended (as I ſuppoſe) to point out an expreſſion of mine of the ſame import, and to intimate as if I had uſed it not in a way of pity but contempt. For ſurely I had a much more natural occaſion to pity him than Dr. Law. And therefore he had little reaſon to call it " an inſult on the memory of one who would not have returned the like, had he been able to defend himſelf."

Unable as he is to defend himſelf, there are thoſe who want no inclination to defend him; and they are welcome to do ſo if they pleaſe, from any thing that I have ſaid of him. But before they ſet themſelves to recriminate, I hope they will conſider well, whether there be really any provocation given.

Why yes: in the way that I have treated him, I have taken (it ſeems) " a method, but a very improper one, to deſtroy the authority of that " learned and ingenuous foreigner"——

As a *foreigner*, as *learned*, as *ingenuous*,——in every of theſe reſpects I acknowledge that he was entitled to fair and candid uſage——And wherein have I uſed him otherwiſe? I have cited his arguments and objections in his own words: nay; this long paſſage itſelf (all but a few lines of it) which Dr. Law produces in his note. I have done more, I have tranſlated it: can he ſay that I have tranſlated wrong? I have done more ſtill, I have taken it to pieces, and ſhewn that theſe reaſons (as Dr. Law calls them, and would have us weigh them) are no reaſons at all, nor have the weight of a feather in them: and that Le Clerc miſtook the main queſtion.

Had he been the moſt learned man in the world, I neither could nor would have paid him more reſpect, if I thought him in an error. For would this gentleman have us to ſubmit to his, or any other learned man's authority for the ſenſe of Scripture? Authority! what is it? or who gave it him? I have tumbled the commentators a good deal myſelf, and have been often led into a labyrinth by them: from which, if any thing has extricated me, it has been a cloſe attention to the original text. Here then is my laſt reſort: for I love to truſt my own eyes, as far as they will carry me.

Had authority ſwayed with me, I ſhould not have ventured to oppoſe ſome of the greateſt of our own divines (as much as I reverence their judgment) when they came athwart me. In the ſection on *Sheol*, particularly, I have done ſo, but without naming them. Being aware indeed, if I had, that this ſame ſpectre of authority might have been turned againſt me like the Gorgon's head; or darted full in the face of my readers, and ſtiffened them againſt all the impreſſions that the beſt arguments of mine could make.

If the learned Archdeacon therefore thinks that I had taken a prejudice againſt Le Clerc, merely for the freedom with which he writes or judges; he

he miſtakes the matter quite: and I thought I had expreſsly obviated any ſuch ſuſpicion. For ſurely I muſt be very unreaſonable to take ſo much liberty myſelf; and deny it to any other man. And yet this is what he ſeems to ſuſpect; for why elſe ſhould he put in Italics that part of Le Clerc's apology for himſelf, for differing from the moſt of commentators in the ſenſe which he had put upon this noted text of Job, *viz.* that "in our enquiry "into the meaning of a Scripture paſſage we are not to regard the number "of ſuffrages, becauſe men are apt to follow and tranſcribe each other—— "*ſed tantum rationum rationem habendam—but that we ſhould be governed by the* "*reaſons of things alone.*" Moſt certainly——But what is this to me; unleſs it be that it juſtifies my conduct by Le Clerc's?

Nevertheleſs to ſhew how ready I am to retract what may give offence to any worthy or good man, I have ſtruck off the paſſage taken notice of by Dr. Law as exceptionable from my book. I ſhall do more than this for Monſ. Le Clerc, and I do it with pleaſure, as it is what none of his admirers, that I know of, have attempted to do for him. I ſhall endeavour to ſet the paſſage in a better light, that ſo this celebrated author may be in his wits again.

As a ſight of Dr. Law's book put me under a neceſſity of re-examining this paſſage, I conſidered it over and over, to ſee if with any little alteration I could extract a better ſenſe from it. And I really think I have found what poor Le Clerc meant; and what his friends may find perhaps, if they conſult the manuſcript again. Probably then inſtead of *vivunt* the author had written *vicunt*; and ſo the *victurum* is to be underſtood as a participle from *vinco*, not from *vivo*. And then his meaning might be this: that *to ſtand upon the duſt*, is as much as to ſay that he ſhall *conquer*; and here the *anthropopathia* comes in a little more intelligibly and aptly: *quia homines qui ſtant in pulvere vincunt, opponuntur enim iis qui in pulvere tecti ſunt et in ſepulcro jacent.* The oppoſition had been better, if he had ſaid, that thoſe who ſtand upon the field of battle, and are victors, are oppoſed to thoſe who are killed or put to flight. But as it is expreſſed, he might probably intend the ſame as *Grotius. Poſtremum in campo ſtare eſt victoris*——For though Grotius is no more without his errors than Le Clerc, yet he uſually miſtakes like a man of ſenſe.

And now I hope I have made very ſufficient and honourable amends to Monſ. Le Clerc, and given full ſatisfaction to his friend Dr. Law.

I confeſs I have ſometimes thought that there was good ſenſe, and good advice in a certain Rabbinical ſaying, which might paſs for one of Pythagoras, for it is to be underſtood in the allegorical way——"Throw a little "ſalt upon your lamp: it will burn the brighter, and the ſtronger." Nevertheleſs, I had much rather that my ſalt ſhould be leſs ſparkling, than that it ſhould be too corroding.

It remains that I return the learned Archdeacon my acknowledgments for the favourable opinion he has expreſſed of the book in general. Nay I thank him too, and very ſincerely, for acquainting me and the public with what he apprehended to be amiſs in it. I never thought myſelf too faultleſs for reproof, nor yet too old to amend. Only I could wiſh he had not charged me with an *inſult*, which neither my nature (I think) nor principle would allow me to intend. I hope it cannot be eſteemed an inſult to point out the faults and errors of a writer, upon ſubjects of importance, whether he be living or dead. If any one think it is; Le Clerc himſelf ſhall diſculp me: for he has a very good ſaying, which he uſes in his own defence, when he was in juſt ſuch a ſituation as mine—*Nec nocet veritas mortuis, et multum prodeſt vivis. (Epiſtolæ Crit.* pa. 80.) "Truth cannot hurt the dead; and "may be of great advantage to the living."——

But having thus diſpatched what I thought due to myſelf; it is time to turn the reader's attention to another ſubject, that may be more agreeable both to him and me.

Amongſt the queſtions relating to the book of Job, there are too that ſeem to be of importance, and yet are ſeldom and but ſlightly touched, *viz.* How this book came to be admitted into the Jewiſh canon; and what was the moſt likely time for it to be ſo.

If we can get out but a little towards the determining theſe two queſtions; it may afford ſome ſatisfaction to thoſe who have a juſt eſteem for the book.

I believe there are few, who are not wedded to an hypotheſis, but will readily acknowledge that the well-known paſſage of Ezekiel, Chap. xiv. where Job is ranked with Noah and Daniel, as alike eminent for his piety; affords a high probability that the book of Job had been admitted before this time into the collection of their ſacred books. For that there was ſuch a collection made from time to time; and that the other books of hiſtory prophecies, *&c.* as they were written and approved, were added to the books of Moſes, and held as ſacred or canonical; appears evident to me from the Scriptures themſelves.

As theſe books then were to the pious Jews the only conſolation that was left them, when their city and temple was deſtroyed, and themſelves led captive to Babylon; there is no queſtion but they would do their utmoſt to preſerve ſome copies of them. Nor could this be very difficult, conſidering the favour which the prophet Jeremiah had obtained with the conqueror, and which he would certainly employ to this good purpoſe. In ſhort, had they not been thus preſerved, they muſt for ever have been loſt both to the Jews and us. For nothing can be more ridiculous than the ſtory of Ezra's renewing them.

Their ſacred books then accompanying them in their captivity; it is natural to think, that next the books of Moſes (and the book of Pſalms, perhaps)

haps) none would be more eagerly read, than a book ſo finely adapted to their circumſtances, ſo fitted to amuſe, inſtruct, and comfort them, as this of Job. And who more likely to recommend it to their peruſal than the prophet Ezekiel himſelf? their fellow-captive; of the ſacerdotal race, and ſo moſt likely to have their ſacred books in his poſſeſſion; endued with the ſpirit of prophecy in his capacity; and ſet by God himſelf as a watchman to the houſe of Iſrael *, to preſerve them from the infection of idolatry, and keep them ſteady to the worſhip of the one true God; till his providence ſhould bring them back again to their own land, at the time that was foretold.——

This, ſurely, is the moſt probable account that can be given of that high reputation Job was now in with thoſe captive Jews. They reverenced Noah as their great forefather; and Daniel had acquired an extraordinary fame for wiſdom, and obtained great favours for them from the king of Babylon. But what had Job to recommend him, beſide the example of his patience, and the admirable leſſons of this book, which to a Jew, who had not then forgot his language, muſt appear in all their native ſtrength and beauty? And if they believed as I do, that the book was written by Job himſelf; none need to wonder at the high eſteem they paid him.

But ſtill the difficulty remains; how or when this book, neither written by an Iſraelite nor of one, nor yet connected with any part of the Jewiſh hiſtory, ſhould be received into the Jewiſh canon.

The ſolution whereof ſeems to be this: that as the canon was made up not only of the legal, hiſtorical, and prophetical books, and the book of Pſalms, but of others that carried a moral inſtruction with them: The book of Job was conſidered as of this claſs, and for its excellency received into the canon, after obtaining the approbation and authority of ſome one or more of their prophets ſtrictly ſo called, that is, perſons extraordinarily inſpired: for this it muſt have had, or it would never have been admitted.

Whoever reads the ſcriptures with attention will find that it is here they lay the ſtreſs of their own authority; I mean upon the divine inſpiration of thoſe perſons who were employed in the writing and compiling, or elſe reviſing and approving them.

Of the inſpiration of Moſes and the prophets, or the writers of the prophetical books, there can be no queſtion. And with regard to the hiſtorical books, it is remarkable that where any of the compilers of the Scripture-hiſtory is named, we always find his title annexed as a prophet or ſeer, which are terms equivalent; or at leaſt ſomething added there or elſewhere to diſtinguiſh him as ſuch; and this without any exception that I know of.

Thus we are told, 1 Chron. xxix. 29, 30. "Now the acts of David "the King, firſt and laſt, behold they are written in the book of Samuel the

* *Ezek.* iii. 17. *and* xxxiii. 7.

"ſeer,

" ſeer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the " ſeer: with all his reign, and his might, and the times that went over him, " and over Iſrael, and over all the kingdoms of the countries"—that is, the neighbouring kingdoms, with which he was concerned.

Theſe words, ſurely, deſcribe a full hiſtory of the acts of David; (allowing for the conciſe way of recording things uſed in thoſe ancient times) and not merely the touching ſome parts of his hiſtory by the bye as it fell in with their own prophecies; which (I think) is Le Clerc's notion. He owns indeed that a great part of the hiſtory which we now have in the books of Samuel, might be taken from the books of theſe prophets here named: but then we are not to think (ſays he) that theſe were the *mazcirim*, or ὑπομνηματογραφοι, hiſtoriographers of David; ſince others had the office of *mazcir*, as appears from 2 Sam. viii. 16. *

But how weak is this, to argue from an obſcure word, upon a point of ſuch importance! I call it an obſcure word; becauſe no one knows what this officer called *mazcir* was, nor is his office any where deſcribed in ſcripture. And if the authors of the Septuagint tranſlation turned the word by ὑπομνηματογραφος, they tranſlated by mere gueſs, as in many other places: nor is their authority here, no nor that of the Latin vulgate, who copied after them, of any weight. The word itſelf ſignifies barely a *remembrancer:* and therefore ſome ſuppoſe this officer to have been a ſort of *maſter of requeſts*; others, as Bp. Patrick, the *chancellor of the kingdom.* The word is oftner uſed (I think) in a religious ſenſe than any other. Their offerings made by fire, an element which naturally aſcends 'till it becomes inviſible, and ſent up to the inviſible God whoſe throne is in heaven, are uſually called, by a word derived from this root, *Memorials* †: being conſidered as a memorial to God in behalf of the perſon that offered, and a memorial to that perſon of the one

* See Le Clerc on 1 Chron. xxix. 29.

† I am really aſhamed for Le Clerc here, who has annihilated the true ſenſe of *azcarah*, or *memorial*, (Levit, ii. 2. and elſewhere,) by tranſlating it *odoramentum:* and gives no other reaſon for it beſide the text of Iſaiah, Ch. lxvi. 3. where *mazcir lebonah* is put for one who burns frankincenſe by way of memorial (*memorans thus*, is Ar. Montanus's verbal tranſlation: he ſhould have ſaid rather, *memorans thure*) But Monſ. Le Clerc, as if he had no notion of any other end of burning incenſe but for the ſake of the *ſmell*, argues from this text, that the verb *hizcir* (though the *Hiphil* from *zacar*) *ſometimes* ſignifies *adolere*, that is, *to burn*, or *to burn for the ſmell.* So it is in his commentary on Leviticus (Ch. ii. 2.) *Nam hizcir quandoque eſt adolere.* But in his Commentary on Iſaiah (to ſhew how poſſible it is for men of learning to grow old and to improve in error) he has left out the *quandoque*, and ſays that though *zacar* properly ſignify *meminiſſe*, yet in the *Hiphil* it is *adolere:* and cites the authority of another learned man to ſupport him in his notion (Com. on Iſaiah lxvi. 3.) *ſed in Hiphil eſt adolere, in quam notionem quomodo a proprio ſignificatu tranſierit, doctè ad hunc locum oſtendit Lud. Cappellus, in Notis Criticis.*

I could not read this (I muſt own) without thinking of a learned commentator, as celebrated perhaps amongſt the Romaniſts, as Cappellus or Le Clerc amongſt Proteſtants; I mean Joh. de Pineda, whoſe Commentaries I ſometimes look into, and have obſerved him citing his authorities in this manner—*doctè Vaſquez—ſapienter Suarez, &c.* when at the ſame time the

one almighty Being, whom alone he was to worſhip; a memorial in ſhort of the covenant betwixt God and his people, which was evermore to be renewed upon their minds; and therefore, the *ſalt of the covenant*, as it is remarkably called, was never to be forgotten, but was to be always mixed with theſe oblations. Lev. ii. 13. It is for this reaſon that he who burns incenſe is called (Iſai. lxvi. 3) *mazcir lebonah*, one that "makes a memorial of in-"cenſe", as it is literally explained in the margin of our Bibles. It is well known that this was a way of preferring their prayers, ſupplications and thankſgivings: and hence thoſe beautiful alluſions to it in the *New Teſtament*, "thy prayers and thine alms (ſaith the angel to Cornelius) are come up "for a *memorial* before God" (Acts x. 4.) And ſo Rev. viii. 4. "And the "ſmoke of the incenſe with the prayers of the ſaints, aſcended up before "God".

This ſame word is uſed likewiſe for celebrating Jehovah in hymns of prayer or praiſe. Thus David, when he had brought up the ark, and fixed

the *learned* Vaſquez, and the *wiſe* Suarez, and the *grave* Pineda ſeemed to me to be all three ſtrangely out of the way.

That Cappellus might diſcuſs this point very learnedly, I make no queſtion; though I have not his *Not. Crit.* on this text of Iſaiah to conſult. But neither he nor Le Clerc ſhall perſuade me, that a verb which ſignifies purely to *remember*, to *make to remember* with its affinities; can ever be brought to ſignify *to burn*, or *to burn for the ſmell*, and entirely drop its original meaning. This would be making the Hebrew an ambiguous language indeed.

I fear I run the hazard of incurring Dr. L—'s diſpleaſure again: but I muſt venture it for the ſake of letting him ſee how dangerous a thing *authority* is.

And to ſhew how impartial a reader I am, I ſhall add here, that I think Mr. Taylor, in his valuable Concordance, hath done a great deal too much honour to a whimſical notion of A. Schultens (as learned a man as he was) by inſerting and adopting it under the root *zacar*.

"Schultens (ſays he) affirms, that the primary ſenſe of this word ſtands in a briſk vigorous "flavour, ſcent, or fragrance," Hoſ. xiv. 7. But it ſignifies little what Schultens *affirms*, or any other learned man, without proof; and much more againſt plain evidence.

There is but one *primary* ſenſe of the word *zacar*, which is, to *remember*. And this may eaſily be traced through all the hundred and eight variations of the word, enumerated and produced in this Concordance. So that it might, with juſt as much reaſon be ſaid of the Latin word *recordari*, that the primary ſenſe of it ſtands in a *briſk flavour*, &c. as of the Hebrew *zacar*.

The text Hoſ. xiv. 7. upon which the ſtreſs is laid, is ſo far from being to the purpoſe; that to tranſlate there *zicro cejen Lebanon* (inſtead of *memoria ejus*—) *odor ejus tanquam vinum* (or, *vini*) *Libani*—is to introduce a needleſs tautology, the ſame thing in a manner being ſaid juſt before of the ſame ſubject, *veriach lo cal-Lebanon, et odor ejus tanquam Libani*. For *riach*, and not *zecer*, is the proper Hebrew word for *odor*, a *ſmell*; and why ſhould we confound one word with another? On the other hand nothing can be more apt or beautiful, than to compare the *memory* of a thing for its ſweetneſs, to that of delicious wine, ſuch as the wine of *Libanus*; or to the wine itſelf. *Zicr-o ce-jen Lebanon, memoria ejus tanquam vini Libani*.

I could wiſh therefore that Mr. Taylor here had paid more regard to his own excellent deſign (expreſſed Sect. 4. of his Preface) viz. to fix the true, natural, primary ſenſe of the Hebrew roots, that ſo the language may not appear vague, ambiguous, and arbitrary, than to have dazled us with the authority of *Schultens*, who I believe in this particular could ſcarce find any thing even in his beloved Arabic to ſupport him. There is ſcarce a word in the Bible, the primary ſenſe whereof is more fixed than this of *zacar*.

it

it in his own city *, appointed a number of the Levites *le hazcir*, to commemorate, and "to thank and praiſe Jehovah the God of Iſrael" to ſupplicate (that is) and to praiſe or celebrate him by his great name of Jehovah the God of Iſrael, of which he himſelf had declared, "this ſhall be my "name for ever, and this my memorial (Heb. *zicr-i)* from generation to "generation †." And ſo the prophet Iſaiah calls upon thoſe whoſe office it was thus to ſupplicate and praiſe Jehovah, *Ham-mazcirim eth Jehovah, al domi lacem*——"You that are the *mazcirim* of Jehovah (appointed to cele-"brate his name in hymns of prayer and praiſe) "keep not ſilence, and "give him no reſt, till he eſtabliſh and till he make Jeruſalem a praiſe in "the earth ‡."

All this ſeems to ſhew, that this office, whatever it was, had reſpect to religion and divine worſhip: and probably the preſident over theſe *mazcirim* might be called by way of eminence, *ham-mazcir*.

But however this may be, an invincible objection to Le Clerc's notion, ſeems to be this; that we are never referred to any acts or books written by theſe *mazcirim*, nor are they once named upon any ſuch occaſion.

No, nor yet Pere Simon's *Sopherim*, or *Scribes*, which he talked ſo much of. The Scripture hiſtory was compiled with quite another view than the journals of the Perſian or any other Eaſtern monarch (which is another thing Le Clerc has weakly urged by way of precedent) and required quite another ſort of writers.

In the text above-cited we are expreſly told that the acts or hiſtory of David was written by three prophets, the latter finiſhing (we may ſuppoſe) what the former had begun.

And ſo of Solomon, we learn (2 Chron. ix. 29.) "Now the reſt of the "acts of Solomon, firſt and laſt, are they not written in the book of Nathan "the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the "viſions of Iddo the ſeer?" And we find this ſame Iddo was employed, together with another prophet, Shemaiah, in writing the acts of Rehoboam, the ſon and ſucceſſor of Solomon, 2 Chr. xii. 15.

The practice thus begun, then, would undoubtedly be continued. And though we do not find after every king's reign the name of the prophet or prophets that wrote his acts; yet we muſt conclude them to have been written by ſome prophet, becauſe no writer of their hiſtory is any where expreſly named (unleſs my ſearch has deceived me) but that his title is given him as a prophet, or it appears at leaſt from other places of Scripture, that he was ſuch.

I take this to be a point of ſome importance as it is the Scripture teſtimony to its own authority: and juſtifies St. Paul's aſſertion of the Scriptures in

* 1 Chron. xvi. 4. † Exod. iii. 15. ‡ Iſaiah lxii. 6, 7.

general,

general, that they were "given by inſpiration of God *"——And again that we are "built upon the foundation of the prophets and apoſtles †"—Not the leaſt intimation given us in the *New Teſtament* of books written either by the *mazcirim* or the *ſopharim*; but in general, that we are to regard them as inſpired, or as having a prophetical authority. And the ſame is here intimated to us in theſe books themſelves; for why ſhould they refer us to ſuch an one a prophet, and ſuch an one a ſeer, for the acts or hiſtory of ſuch a King, and be ſo careful to inform us of the quality of the writer; but to draw from us a proportional reſpect, and make us receive it with that reverence which is its due?

It may be objected, perhaps, that Ezra who is ſuppoſed to have been (and probably was) the compiler of the books of Chronicles, where theſe references are found; has himſelf only the title of *has-ſopher* or *the ſcribe*, and is not called a prophet. It is true he is not; but then neither is he any where *named* as a writer of any of the books of Scripture: So that this does not annul the foregoing obſervation. And yet it is probable that he was the writer of the book that bears his name, as well as the compiler of the books of Chronicles; and therefore probable too, that he was ſomething more than a ſcribe. Or however this be, there were prophets then in being to give their approbation and their ſanction to his hiſtory. So that there is no neceſſity of ſuppoſing here any exception to the general rule.

But I did not mean to enter upon an examination of the Scripture canon. What I intend is only this, that it ſeems plain from the references above taken notice of, that the prophets were their hiſtorians.

And this appears further confirmed by the great mixture of hiſtory which we find in ſome of the prophetical books. For what ſhould we conclude from hence, but that theſe prophets muſt have been the writers of that part of their hiſtory? Thus, for example, when we ſee among the prophecies of Iſaiah ſeveral chapters of hiſtory, in the ſame words (in a manner) as we find them in the book of Kings: Can any thing be more natural than to conclude, that he was the writer of this part of the hiſtory; though it had not been told us, as it is expreſsly, of one of their kings with whom this prophet was contemporary, "Now the reſt of the acts of Uzziah, firſt and laſt did Iſaiah the pro-"phet the ſon of Amos write. ‡" And again of another of them, ‖ "Now "the reſt of the acts of *Hezekiah*, and his goodneſs, behold they are written "in the Viſion of Iſaiah the prophet the ſon of Amos; (the very title of Iſaiah's prophecy, for it is called his *viſion*) "and in the book of the Kings "of Judah and Iſrael"—moſt probably, the book of Kings which we now have.

Iſaiah propheſied in the days of *Uzziah*, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, as we learn Iſaiah i. 1. That he wrote the acts of the firſt

* 2 Tim. iii. 16. † Epheſ. ii. 20. ‡ 2 Chron. xxvi. 22. ‖ 2 Chron. xxxii. 32.

and the laſt of theſe kings we are here expreſsly told: and therefore that he wrote thoſe of the two others likewiſe, there can be little room to doubt. The account we have of theſe four reigns then in the book of Kings, we have reaſon to conclude to have been added to the hiſtory by this prophet.

There is yet another, and a very conſiderable proof that the prophets were their hiſtorians, in that the books of hiſtory and prophecies went anciently by the ſame title of *the Books of the Prophets*; with this only mark to diſtinguiſh them, that the hiſtorical books were called the *former* prophets, and the prophetical the *later*.

And this ſeems to be the reaſon, that in the citations made in the New Teſtament, we never hear of any hiſtorical books as diſtinct from the others; but all is comprized under the two claſſes of Moſes and the Prophets; or at the moſt under three, *viz.* Moſes, the Prophets and the Pſalms. The Pſalms being at the head of a third claſs of books, which for want of another name, and being of a miſcellany nature, were called by the ancient Jews Cetubim, or *Scriptures* in general: that is, *holy Scriptures*; for this was their meaning. And ſo the Greek tranſlators expreſs the title to the full, by calling them ἁγιόγραφα. And it is obſervable that, in the New Teſtament, ſcripture and holy ſcripture, or the words γραφὴ and ἁγιαγραφὴ, are uſed indifferently, when ſpeaking of the books in this collection; and it is ſaid of all of them, without diſtinction, that they were "given by inſpiration of God." 2 Tim. iii. 16.

The third claſs then, or Cetubim, where ſtands the book of Job, we may ſafely conclude to have had the ſame ſanction with the others (whatever might be the reaſons for thus claſſing them) and that they could not have been admitted into this collection without a prophetical authority.

And in fact we find, that after the ſpirit of prophecy was withdrawn from this people, that is, after the time of Malachi, their laſt prophet, the ſcripture canon was ſealed up, and no more books added: though ſome very uſeful and inſtructive books were afterwards written, as particularly Eccleſiaſticus, in the *laſhon ha-kodeſh* too, the holy tongue, the Hebrew. And yet the Jews never admitted this into the canon; though the Romaniſts at preſent do, as well as ſome other books of far leſs merit.

I ſuppoſe it appears from what has been ſaid, that the Book of Job, whenever it was received into the Jewiſh canon, muſt have had the authority of ſome prophet for its admiſſion.

Let us go on to the other enquiry——What was the moſt likely time for its reception. And I believe moſt of thoſe who have conſidered the matter with attention, will agree to fix it to the time of Moſes, of Solomon, or of Hezekiah.

If we ſuppoſe, with the counterfeit Origen, that it was given the Iſraelites by Moſes: he met with it, probably, when he ſojourned in the land of Midian,

Midian, a country not very far from that of Job, among the collections of his father-in-law Jethro; who appears to have been a perſon of great wiſdom, and could not want a curioſity therefore for books ſo full of wiſdom and inſtruction as this of Job. And then if (as the ſame writer adds) Moſes made a preſent of it to his people lying under the hard bondage of Egypt: or if he reſerved it to ſupport them during their wandrings through the wilderneſs: the book muſt have been of admirable uſe to them in either of theſe circumſtances. But as this is merely a conjecture, unſupported by any proper evidence; and as we have no intimation of any thing of this kind either in the books of Moſes, or any other book of Scripture: this ſeems to call upon us to look out for another hypotheſis.

And the next moſt likely time for the book of Job to have made its appearance among the Iſraelites, was in the days of Solomon. Not for any likeneſs of ſtyle, which ſome have fancied to be between this book and thoſe of Solomon; (for the ſtyle is very unlike) but becauſe that wiſe king would be very inquiſitive after every curioſity of this kind, and had all the advantages of procuring them that any king could have. His commerce by ſea was very extenſive: and what will not an extenſive commerce ſupply? The neighbouring princes from all quarters either came to hear his wiſdom; or courted his friendſhip by the rich preſents which they made him. If the book of Job was preſented to him by one of theſe, what pity is it that the giver of ſo fine a Jewel ſhould not have his name recorded!

Or ſhall we ſuppoſe it among the preſents made him by the Queen of Shebah? ſhe came from a country not far off from Job's, and with the ſame curioſity as others, led by the fame of Solomon. And a lady ſo inquiſitive after wiſdom was as likely as any to have this book in her poſſeſſion: and might well eſteem it the moſt ſuitable and the moſt valuable gift that could have been offered to the wiſeſt of men. She came to "prove him" (ſays the text) "with hard queſtions." If ſhe brought this book with her; I ſuppoſe, many a knotty queſtion would ariſe from the peruſal of it worthy of Solomon to reſolve. But let us not wander far in theſe airy regions of imagination.—

All that can be reaſonably concluded here is, that this wiſe king was very likely to have ſo celebrated a book, as this muſt needs have been from its firſt appearance, in his keeping: but whether by his authority and that of the prophets of his time, it was then added to their ſacred books, is another queſtion—Here too is an abſolute ſilence; and we have not ſo much as a hint in ſcripture to proceed upon. We know not indeed when the works of Solomon himſelf were firſt introduced into the canon: but whenever this was done, if the book of Job was found among them, this too was in all probability the time of its admiſſion.

Let us go on then to the reign of Hezekiah. And here we have a little light to go before us. For I think it appears from Prov. xxv. 1. that the writings of king Solomon came at this time under a review.

It is ſaid, 1 Kings iv. 32. that Solomon ſpake three thouſand proverbs ——Whereas the whole collection that we now have in the book of Proverbs, ſcarce amounts to one thouſand: and even theſe appear to have been collected at different times. At Ch. x. the title of the book is repeated, as is uſual before a ſecond part. "The Proverbs of Solomon, a wiſe ſon "maketh a glad father," *&c.* And again at Ch. xxv. begins a new ſet of proverbs thus prefaced, "Theſe are alſo proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out." The Hebrew word *heytiku*, here rendered *copied out*, hath two ſignifications: the firſt, and moſt proper is, to make to grow old, that is, to perpetuate. For the noun preciſely ſignifies *old without decay*. And in this ſenſe it is applied by Daniel to the everlaſting God, whom he calls the ʼattik jomin or jomaia, the ancient of days *. The other ſenſe of the verb is to transfer—that is (ſtill keeping to the original idea) to make to paſs from an old ſtate to a new. Thus Children "weaned from the milk" (Iſai. xxviii. 9.) are in the next words, and in a ſimilar phraſe, called ʼattikê mis-ſhaddaim, "transferred from the breaſts."

Taking the word *heytiku* here then in both theſe ſignifications, there could not be found a more apt one to expreſs what the men of Hezekiah did, if they were appointed to reviſe king Solomon's writings, or collect his genuine ſayings, and ſelect from them what were proper to be added to this book of Proverbs. To take them from the common ſtore, and to inſert them into the ſacred canon, was both to transfer and to perpetuate them.

For I ſuppoſe no one will affirm, that every thing which Solomon ſpoke or wrote, eſpecially conſidering his frailty in his later years, ſhould be received as ſacred, without paſſing the examination of ſome one or more of God's prophets. And the high eſteem which the prophet Iſaiah was now in, will not ſuffer us to doubt, but that he was at the head of thoſe *men of Hezekiah* (as they are called) or the perſons commiſſioned by that pious king for this purpoſe.

Hezekiah, as a lineal deſcendant and ſucceſſor of king Solomon, was heir to all the treaſures of wiſdom which his great anceſtor had left behind him. And how could they be diſpoſed of better, than by being put into the hands of Iſaiah, and others joined in a commiſſion with him, amongſt whom might be Hoſhea and Micah (no ordinary prophets, and they both flouriſhed in the golden days of Hezekiah) to ſelect from them what was proper to be inſerted into the ſacred code? The Books of Solomon then, we have reaſon

* Dan. vii. 9. xiii. 22.

to

to conclude, were at this time fixed as ſacred or canonical. Or if there had been a collection of his proverbs, (as there ſeems to have been) approved and authorized before: yet now there was a new addition made to them, upon this ſolemn reviſal; and probably the two other books of Solomon, the Eccleſiaſtes and the Song of Songs, were at the ſame time added to the canon.

There is an obſcure hint of this kind in the Talmud, where amongſt a heap of inſignificant things, an old tradition of ſome moment is here and there preſerved.

"The Talmudiſts" (ſays Mercier, * one of the beſt Hebræans of his time, and who was very converſant with theſe books) "in Bava bathra, "Ch. i. are of opinion, that Hezekiah and his company wrote the books "denoted by the ſymbolical word יִמְשָׁק JiMShoK, *viz.* Iſaiah, Proverbs, "Song of Songs, and Eccleſiaſtes—Into which opinion they ſeem to have "been led by what is ſaid Prov. xxv. 1. Theſe are alſo proverbs of Solo-"mon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out."

It may be proper to acquaint thoſe who are ſtrangers to this ſort of literature, that theſe ſymbolical words were made up of the initial letters of words. And thus every letter in the word IMSK or Jimſhok (as they pronounce it with the points) is put to mark out a particular book, the title whereof begun with that letter, *viz.* as it is here explained, Iſaiah, Meſhalim, Shirhaſhirim, and Koheleth; the Hebrew names of the four books, Iſaiah, Proverbs, Song of Songs, and Eccleſiaſtes.

Theſe Talmudical doctors then had an obſcure tradition delivered down to them of ſomething done in Hezekiah's time relating to theſe books of Scripture. But they evidently miſtook the meaning of it, if they ſuppoſed the f books to have been written by Hezekiah and his Men; inſtead of being then collected, and reviſed, or ſolemnly approved, and added to the ſacred canon. For this, no doubt, was the truth of the caſe; and ſuch a tradition might have been conveyed down from remote times, in the very ſymbol here ſpecified. For it appears that the uſe of theſe ſymbols was very ancient with this people; how ancient we know not. The worthy dean of Norwich Dr. Prideaux, who has deſerved ſo well of every lover of the Scriptures, in his Connection (Pt. 2. B. 3. pa. 184, Octavo) hath given us a remarkable inſtance of it in the word MaCaBI, put by Judas Maccabæus as a motto in his Standard, and made up of the initial letters of a ſentence taken from the Song of Moſes on the miraculous paſſage of the red ſea (Exod. xv. 11.) Mi

* Talmudici in Bava bathra, cap. 1.—Putant Ezekiam et ejus cætum ſcripſiſſe libros quotum ſymbolum eſt vox יִמְשָׁק, nempe Iſaiam, Proverbia, Canticum canticorum, et Eccleſiaſtem. In quam ſententiam adducti videntur ex eo quod prenotatur initio cap. 25. hujus libri. Inſuper hæ ſunt ſententiæ Solomonis quas exſcripſerunt viri Hezekiæ, &c. See Merc. in Proverb. ſubinitio.

Camoca

Camoca Ba-elim Jehovah? Who is like unto thee among the Gods, O Jehovah?

This ſhews the cuſtom to have obtained 160 years or more before Chriſt; and the reader, if he pleaſe, may ſee another example of the ſame kind, probably as old, or older, than this; which, as it has ſome relation to a paſſage in my book, I chuſe to give it in the note below *.

The uſe of theſe ſymbols then being very ancient, if the firſt letter in this word Jimſhok ſtand for Iſaiah, it ſeems to intimate to us the part which this great prophet had in reviſing and fixing the authority of theſe books of Solomon.

But

* I have ſaid, pa. 273. (Quarto Edit.) that שילה (Gen. xlix. 10.) in old Jacob's celebrated prophecy of the Meſſiah, ſhould be pronounced Shilah, and ſignifies *her child.* And I am ſtill of opinion that this is the moſt probable meaning of the word. And ſo ſays D. Kimchi, the completeſt maſter of the Hebrew language, perhaps, of all the Rabbins. Both Jews and Chriſtians acknowledge the Meſſiah to be here intended: But how to explain the *name*, is the difficulty.

The Chaldee paraphraſt, Onkelos, certainly took it for one of thoſe ſymbolical words that are made up of initial letters: for he explains it of the Meſſiah, de deliah hi malcutha, *whoſe is the kingdom:* which turned into Hebrew will be thus, exactly anſwering to the word SHILAH, ש-לו המלוכה, She Jeſh Lo-Ham-melucah. Literally, Qui eſt ei regnum, *who to him is the kingdom.* For this is the uſual turn of the Hebrew phraſe.

The interpretation here given of the word may be near as old as the firſt uſe of the Chaldee paraphraſing; which commenced of courſe ſoon after the return from the Babyloniſh captivity.

That it was older than the Septuagint Tranſlation, ſeems plain from hence; that theſe tranſlators give it to us curtailed, omitting the laſt word *hammelucah*; for fear, perhaps, that living in Egypt and amongſt their Gentile maſters; the word *kingdom* might create a jealouſy that would turn to their diſadvantage. At leaſt this is the beſt reaſon that I can think of, why they ſhould turn the word Shilah by ᾧ ἀπόκειται, cui repoſitum eſt, or τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ, quæ repoſita ſunt ei; anſwering to *She-lo*, or *She-jeſh-lo:* leaving the thing itſelf (viz. hammelucah, the kingdom) to be underſtood, or to remain a ſecret with themſelves.

But this again, probably, gave occaſion to the irregular pointing of the word, according to which it is now pronounced Shilo', not Shilah. The Maſorites (I ſuppoſe) had been uſed to hear it thus pronounced; and therefore thus they pointed it. There are other inſtances of the ſame kind, and ſome pretty remarkable. Nevertheleſs their pointing is in the main very right and regular: and they have thereby undoubtedly tranſmitted to us the true pronunciation of the Hebrew language; and every attempt to alter it, ſeems bold and hazardous.

One thing we cannot but obſerve from this inſtance; that whatever liberty the Maſorites might take in pointing, or thoſe that were before them in pronouncing; yet they dared not alter a letter of the Hebrew text. It does not appear to me (I own) that they ever wilfully corrupted it. We ſee the original letters are ſtill preſerved in the word Shiloh, שילה; though in after times, from the occaſion I have mentioned, or ſome other, they were led to give the word a different pronunciation, and a different pointing, than that which naturally belonged to it.

Though the interpretation given to this word by the Chaldee Paraphraſt (according to the conjecture here offered) be undoubtedly very old, and hath a plauſible appearance: there ſeems to me to be one objection to it, which is this. I think the Meſſiah in old Jacob's time had not yet been deſcribed as a *king*. The firſt revelation of this ſort, was that made to David, of a Son that ſhould ſit upon his throne for ever. From thenceforward he was expected as a king or prince: but without forgetting his other character of the Redeemer of Mankind, and the

ſuffer-

But I confeſs, it appears more probable to me, that the book of Job might be here meant by the firſt letter of the word Jimſhok.

For why the book of Iſaiah ſhould be aſcribed to Hezekiah and his men, when it was the work of Iſaiah alone; or why the taking it into the canon ſhould be commemorated by ſuch a ſymbol, when it muſt follow of courſe from his being a prophet eminent and confeſſed; or why the book of Hoſea ſhould not as well be added to this ſymbol, ſince he lived and prophecied in Hezekiah's time—are queſtions difficult to be reſolved. But if the Book of Job, together with the three of Solomon, were at this time taken into the canon, it is very eaſy to ſee a reaſon for perpetuating the memory of it by ſuch a ſymbol as this.

The learned will object, no doubt, that the name of Job is written with an Aleph, not a Jod, as the firſt letter; which is very true. But then they know too, that this Aleph never was pronounced, and that the name was alwas ſpoken, as it is now, Jjob or Job. And as theſe ſymbols were delivered down among their oral traditions, for many centuries before ever they were written; this word, as it paſſed from mouth to mouth, muſt neceſſarily have been pronounced Jimſhok, even ſuppoſing the book of Job the firſt here meant. So that it is no wonder, if when their traditions were collected and put into writing, to preſerve them, a century or two after Chriſt, they ſhould write this word juſt as they had been always taught to pronounce it, with a jod and not an aleph; and ſo miſtook the firſt letter to mean Iſaiah and not Job.

This ſeems to me no improbable account of this matter. And here then we have found a time, and a very fit one, for the book of Job to be admitted into the Jewiſh canon; and this, I think, is as low down as we can go. If any chuſe to place it higher, I have no objection to it. It might be admitted in the days of Solomon, or even of Moſes, for any thing that appears to the contrary in the book itſelf——And they who think ſo, will have much more reaſon on their ſide than thoſe who place it lower; and who would diveſt it of that hiſtorical truth, and venerable antiquity which contributes to render it ſo highly valuable and inſtructive.

If it be ſtill asked, why Iſaiah or any other prophet ſhould allot to the book of Job a place among the ſacred books, when it might have been preſerved among the common ones, and read very uſefully: I might reply, perhaps with good reaſon, becauſe he held it to be inſpired, and the work

ſufferings he was to undergo on this account, which were foretold from the beginning. They are theſe two different ſtates of his humiliation and exaltation that make the ſubject of ſo many amazing prophecies in the Book of Pſalms, and the other prophetical Books: and muſt needs create great perplexity to the Jews, who have rejected, and do ſtill reject, the only true key to them, in the life, the death, the reſurrection and aſcenſion of the bleſſed Jeſus, and that kingdom with which he is inveſted by his heavenly Father—an *everlaſting* kingdom; and therefore, to be ſure, a ſpiritual one.

of

of Job himſelf. There is a ſection upon this ſubject in the following Diſſertation (*viz.* the tenth of Part 1.) where the reader may find ſomething to entertain his curioſity, if not to ſatisfy his judgment.

But whether we aſcribe the authority of the book of Job to Job himſelf, or to any other prophet; a prophetical authority it muſt have had. And the place where it now ſtands in the Hebrew Bible, ſeems to ſhew that it was admitted upon this reviſal of the writings of Solomon. For it is placed there immediately after the book of Proverbs, which being at this time only reviſed and augmented, kept the place it had before in the ſacred code. And the next place was allotted to the book of Job, now firſt admitted into this collection *.

That Solomon collected many books for his own uſe, there is no queſtion. We are told at the concluſion of the book of Eccleſiaſtes, that "of making "many books there is no end"; and of courſe therefore of furniſhing libraries there can be none. But whatever books the curioſity of Solomon had brought together, the book of Job alone (it ſeems) was found worthy of a place among the ſacred ones, And it is well for us, that we have theſe obſcure hints remaining (ſince we can have no better) of the time of its admiſſion. A time, than which none could be more honourable for him, nor more unexceptionable in all the Jewiſh hiſtory. In the reign of one of the beſt and moſt religious of their princes; and when their greateſt prophets flouriſhed; reſpected, honoured, and conſulted by their king. And moreover, when the ſchools of learning as well as religion, through the royal favour, were raiſed to ſuch a height, that, according to the Talmudical doctors (to give it in their own hyperbolical phraſe) you might ſearch the land from Dan even to Beerſhebah, and there was no ſuch thing to be found as vulgus terræ, meaning an illiterate perſon †.

If any one ſhould object after all, that a Jewiſh tradition is but a weak foundation to proceed upon, as there are many of them falſe and trifling: I might reply, that a diſtinction ought undoubtedly to be made; and that a tradition delivered down by ſuch a ſymbol as this, has the appearance (at leaſt) of ſomething important, beſide that it carries upon it a mark of great antiquity: and moreover, that what is ſaid (Prov. xxv. 1.) of the part Hezekiah took in having the book of Proverbs reviſed, and ſome additions made to it from king Solomon's remains; gives a ſtrong confirmation—a ſort of ſcripture-teſtimony to the tradition conveyed by this ſymbol.

* In the Septuagint indeed, or Greek tranſlation, it is put immediately before the book of Pſalms: a reſpect (probably) being herein had to the great antiquity of the Book. And ſo St. Jerome places it: and ſo it is placed in our Bibles.

† See Mercier on Prov. xxv 1. who quotes the Talmud for it, Tractatu Sanhedrin: and adds this ſenſible reflection of his own; non ignorabat probus et pius rex, inſtitutionem literarum et doctrinam pietatis fontem eſſe.

There

There is ſtill a further confirmation of it to be had from the Book of Eccleſiaſtes, which might well deſerve to be enlarged on, would the limits of this preface allow of it. For if we may judge from internal characters (and we have no other light to go by, where hiſtory is ſilent, and the opinions of the learned are ſo various) I think it will appear probable to thoſe, who conſider the matter with attention, that this ſurprizing Book called Eccleſiaſtes or the Preacher, and delivered to us in the form of a ſermon, is indeed a ſermon preached by Solomon, but long after his death. I mean, that it was compoſed out of Solomon's remains, and had this form and title given it by thoſe that were appointed to reviſe and publiſh them. Amongſt whom the prophet Iſaiah, if I miſtake not, hath left us a little mark of his own hand-writing at the concluſion of the book, for thoſe who are capable judges of it.

Indeed the thing in the main, and when examined without prejudice, almoſt ſpeaks itſelf. For the ſermon plainly ends with a repetition of the text (as we may call it) or the ſame words with which it begun, "Vanity "of vanities, ſaith the Preacher, all is vanity". Eccleſ. xii. 8.

What follows is an addition by the Editors of this remarkable Sermon, giving ſome account of the Preacher and his wiſdom, v. 9, and 10. Of themſeves, the collectors of his writings and his ſayings, v. 11. Of the caution with which Books are to be uſed, v. 12. and the drift or deſign of this Sermon before us, in the laſt two verſes. "Let us hear the concluſion "of the whole matter, Fear God," *&c.*

Scarce any thing can be more clear at firſt ſight than that this is in the nature of an Epilogus, added by thoſe who had the reviſal and the publiſhing of this Book of Solomon's. And who could theſe be, but the ſame that reviſed his Book of Proverbs? So that we have here again a ſtrong mark or proof in favour of the ſymbol abovementioned. Which is all that I mean to obſerve from it at preſent.

Since the firſt Edition of this book, having had the opportunity of reading ſome of the volumes of Lord Bolinbroke's works, I obſerved that in his firſt Eſſay to Mr. Pope (Vol. 3. Quarto) treating of the right and wrong application of Figures, his Lordſhip ſhews a great inclination to ſet aſide the interpretation given to the ſtory of the brazen ſerpent (Numb. 21.) conſidered as a type.

This, as it affected a paſſage in my book; but much more as it affects a paſſage in the Goſpel *, I had the curioſity to tranſcribe; and ſhall here give it the reader with a few remarks.

"One rule (ſays his Lordſhip, page 434.) ought to be obſerved in-"violably, *viz.* of admitting or rejecting figures, as they are juſtified or

* John iii. 14, 15.

" not juſtified by their application. Their application is their criterion." Again, " Figures that typify nothing, are nothing, or they are worſe than " nothing; they are ſo many lies, ſince they pretend to denote ſomething " real, when nothing real exiſts. How the ſight of that brazen ſerpent, " which Moſes erected in the Deſert, cured the Iſraelites of the venomous " bite of real ſerpents, I know not. Miraculouſly, ſay our divines. Juſt " as other images work cures at this day, ſay your divines. Be this as it " will, the figure typified very determinately what God intended it ſhould " typify when he ſaid, *pone eum pro ſigno*. But when your divines and ours " agree to make it a ſign of Chriſt lifted up on the croſs, and crucified; " he muſt be very cabbaliſtical indeed, who can diſcover the ſame deter- " mination. Real ſerpents had cauſed a real plague. A brazen ſerpent " was the figure that ſignified this event to be over. It ſignified therefore, " at the ſame time, that the Son of God himſelf was to come into the world " near two thouſand years afterwards, to deliver mankind from the allego- " rical plague of ſin, which he did not moſt certainly cauſe. How rea- " ſonable is one, how abſurd the other application of this figure! How " neceſſary is it therefore to examine ſcrupulouſly the application of every " figure, that we may not be impoſed on by falſe appearances?"

I could wiſh the noble writer had examined a little more ſcrupulouſly into this matter: for then he could not have given us ſuch a miſrepreſentation of the thing.

In the firſt place the Latin Vulgate ſeems to have miſled him. And I ſuppoſe he was too polite to trouble himſelf with the Hebrew literature, or even the verbal Latin tranſlation of the Hebrew text. For he might have found it there, not *pone eum pro ſigno*, but *pone eum ſuper vexillum:* as Ar. Montanus has well rendered, *ſim otho yal nes*.

Next, his Lordſhip ſeems to have miſtaken the meaning even of the Latin Vulgate tranſlator. For it is probable that he uſed the word *ſigno* here in a military ſenſe; *viz.* for an *enſign*; as this beſt anſwers to the Hebrew word *nes*—the proper word for *ſignum*, as it means a ſign or token, being in the Hebrew אות oth.

Further, the noble writer ſuppoſes this plague (as he calls it) to be over, before, or upon the erecting of this ſtandard. " Real ſerpents (ſays he) " had cauſed a real plague. A brazen ſerpent was the figure that ſignified " this event to be over."

Here again, that polite negligence, which is ſo obſervable in his Lordſhip's writings, would not ſuffer him to conſult ſo much as his Engliſh Bible. For he might have found there, very evidently, that the plague was not over when this brazen ſerpent was erected; and that the very deſign of erecting it was, that it might be an effectual remedy for thoſe bites of ſerpents, and thereby put an end to their plague. Num. xxi. 8, 9. " And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes, " make

" make thee a fiery ſerpent, and ſet it upon a pole; and it ſhall come to " paſs, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, ſhall live. " And Moſes made a ſerpent of braſs, and put it upon a pole; and it came " to paſs, that if a ſerpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the ſerpent " of braſs he lived."

Can any thing be more plain, than that this ſymbol was erected as a remedy; and not merely as a ſign that the plague was over? for it was not ſo, when this was firſt erected.

But now comes the demonſtration, that this figure could not typify Chriſt—" A brazen ſerpent was the figure that ſignified this event to be " over. It ſignified therefore at the ſame time, that the Son of God him- " ſelf was to come into the world near two thouſand years afterwards to de- " liver mankind from the allegorical plague of ſin, which he did not moſt " certainly cauſe."

It is a very eaſy, and a common thing in controverſy, for an adverſary to miſtake his adverſary's meaning, and then proceed to triumph in confuting of his own miſtakes—The adverſaries of Scripture are often guilty of this error.

His Lordſhip here ſuppoſes the ſerpent to repreſent Chriſt, and ſo apprehends and argues wrong from this miſtake. I think I have ſhewn it to be much more probable that it was the *nes*, or pole, that repreſented the Redeemer; who by his death upon the croſs defeated the old ſerpent, who is ſaid to " have the power of death," and reſtored us to the hopes of life and immortality.

We have here then in Chriſt crucified, a remedy againſt death, the effect and puniſhment of ſin; as the Iſraelites had in this ſymbol. And ſo according to L—d B——'s criterion, the figure is juſtified by the application.

As our Saviour is never repreſented by the ſymbol of a ſerpent any where elſe; but is plainly propheſied of under the figure of a *nes* or ſtandard to be erected, to which all nations ſhould reſort, (Iſai. xi. 10.) as the alluſion (John iii. 14.) conſiſts only in the *lifting up*, and the ſalutary effects of it to true believers: " As Moſes lifted up the ſerpent in the Wilderneſs, ſo muſt " the Son of Man be lifted up," it follows, " that whoſoever believeth in " him ſhould not periſh, but have eternal life."——And ſure, no man will ſay that the Iſraelites were healed by believing in the ſerpent. And ſo again, John xii. 32. " And if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto " me. This he ſaid, ſignifying what death he ſhould die." In a word, as it is the erected ſtandard that draws all men to it, and Chriſt is propheſied of as ſuch a ſtandard, to be erected in due time: I had good reaſon, ſurely, to ſuppoſe, that Chriſt was here repreſented, not by the ſerpent hung up as a trophy, but by the *nes* or ſtandard on which it hung. And this the rather, becauſe by his death upon the croſs he is ſaid to " have deſtroyed him who

" had the power of death, that is, the devil;" (Heb. ii. 14.) " that old " ſerpent" (as he is called, Rev. xii. 9.) who by the ſucceſs of his temptations firſt brought death into the world.

I would not have any one think this a peculiar notion of mine: old Dr. Jackſon is of this opinion in his expoſition of the Creed. And if the authority of the Jewiſh rabbins be of any conſideration, theſe likewiſe plainly favour this interpretation of the thing. For as they love to amplify a little in their comments on the Scripture miracles, they tell us this *nes* or pole on which Moſes hung the ſerpent, was no other than a tree planted in this wilderneſs by Seth the ſon of Adam, being a branch or ſlip of the tree of life in Paradiſe, plucked from thence and given him by an angel. They ſay, moreover, it was from this very tree that Moſes cut his rod with which he wrought ſuch wonders.

What I meant to obſerve from this fable is only this, that according to the notions of theſe learned Jews, the life-giving virtue was in the *nes* or ſtandard, and not in the ſerpent that was hung upon it. And one may ſay, perhaps, of ſome of theſe Jewiſh fables, what Strabo ſaid of thoſe of Homer: that as wild as they may ſeem, they had ſome foundation however in truth.

I have ſuppoſed, pa. 304. (and given ſome reaſons to ſhew it probable) that Moſes, when he erected this object of their wonder and attention, " ex- " plained to them its myſterious meaning." The very expreſſion uſed (Numbers xxi. 9.) ſeems to intimate as much. For where it is ſaid, " if a " ſerpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the ſerpent of braſs he lived" —the word hibbit, *beheld*, ſignifies not merely to gaze or ſtare upon a thing but *to look at with attention*, to conſider, to contemplate. And what ſhould they conſider or contemplate, unleſs Moſes had furniſhed them with ſomething more than the bare figure to contemplate on?

It may be worthy of our obſervation, that the very ſame word *hibbit*, is uſed in the well known prophecy of Zechariah (ch. xii. 10.) cited John xix. 37. " They ſhall look on him whom they pierced"——with underſtanding and attention here then; for they are deſcribed as beholding it with great ſorrow and repentance.

It is a conjecture of ſome learned men, that Satan tempted Eve in the ſhape of one of theſe fiery flying ſerpents, that here made ſuch havock among the Iſraelites; han nechaſhim ha ſeraphim (as they are called in the original) and that Eve, from his bright appearance, took him for a ſeraph, in another ſenſe, *viz.* an Angel of light: and ſo was the more eaſily ſeduced. What St. Paul ſays, 2 Cor. xi. 14. of " Satan being transformed into an angel of " light;" ſeems to give ſome countenance to this notion; for I think we read of no inſtance of this kind in all the bible, unleſs we allow of it here. And yet St. Paul ſeems to ſpeak of it as a well-known thing. So that probably this might be the current interpretation of this difficult piece of hiſtory in

in St. Paul's time. In obſcure matters, which we are under no obligation to penetrate, there is no need to be poſitive. But if it were the ſame ſort of ſerpent that now infeſted the Iſraelites which the devil had before made his inſtrument to tempt Eve: here is a ſtill cloſer application of the figure, and we ſee a great propriety in it. This image of poliſhed braſs (very aptly repreſenting the bright and burning colour of this ſort of ſerpent) looks backward to that old ſerpent that triumphed over our firſt parents credulity, and ſo brought ſin and death and diſeaſes into the world: but is here triumphed over in his turn. And this again looks forward to another and a greater triumph of the ſecond Adam, or ſeed of the woman (as he is called, Gen. iii. 15.) who brought an effectual remedy for all the evils introduced into the world by ſin and Satan, and came to deſtroy his empire over mankind.

Every way, methinks, the figure holds; and is juſtified by its criterion (as the noble writer calls it) or the application.

I have ſaid (pa. 305. Quarto Ed.) that I would "not lay any ſtreſs "upon that aſſertion of Juſtin Martyr, that the *nes* or ſtandard on which "this brazen ſerpent hung, bore the figure of a croſs; as ſuppoſing it only "a conjecture." And yet it muſt be owned that the conjecture is a very natural one; becauſe a tranſverſe beam at top, if the ſerpent were coiled round it, would ſhew him to the moſt advantage.

But what ſhall we ſay, if there be ſomething of this great myſtery, I mean the death of the croſs; (the very hinge upon which our religion turns, and of ſuch importance in St. Paul's account, that he determined to know nothing in compariſon of it) interwoven into the firſt great promiſe that was given of a Redeemer?

It is what I have not ſeen obſerved, indeed, by any of our divines or commentators; and therefore I propoſe it with ſome diffidence. And the reader muſt judge for himſelf, whether there be any weight in it or no. It is an obſervation of St. Jerome of prophecies in general, Omnis prophetia ænigmatibus involvitur, that "there is always ſomething obſcure and ænigmati-"cal in them." If it be ſo, there is an obvious reaſon why it ſhould be ſo, *viz.* that men may not undertake to fulfil them of their own heads; but that the hand of God may appear as viſible in the completion, as prediction. However, in this view a prophecy fulfilled is a riddle ſolved: the obſcurity is cleared up by the event, and leaves no longer any room to doubt of the intention of the riddle-maker.

In the ſentence paſſed upon the ſerpent, Gen. iii. 15. we have theſe words: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy "ſeed, and her ſeed: It ſhall bruiſe thy head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his "heel."

Taking the ſerpent to mean Satan, and the ſeed of the woman Chriſt, which is the uſual interpretation; we ſee here, that as the *head* of the one, ſo the *heel* of the other was to be *bruiſed*.

Now

Now if we recollect all the kinds of death that we have either heard or read of; I believe we ſhall find none where the heel is bruiſed in ſo remarkable a manner, as in crucifixion. For the feet being here laid one over another, and with a nail driven through them violently bent towards the croſs, the heel muſt of neceſſity be greatly hurt or bruiſed.

Here then is ſomething literal (at leaſt) in this firſt prophecy of our Redeemer. And if it were only ſo far explained to our firſt parents as to let them know that all their hopes of pardon, and a reſtoration to the divine favour, depended on this ſeed of the woman, who by ſuffering death for them was to procure them a reſurrection to life and immortality: what a light does this throw upon the whole ſubſequent hiſtory? We then ſee the reaſon of the early inſtitution of ſacrifices; and the typical deſign of them appears with great clearneſs. The faith of Abraham, and his ready obedience to that hard command of God to ſacrifice his only ſon, that child of promiſe, if he concluded this to be the great ſacrifice that was to be offered for the redemption of mankind; has no longer any difficulty in it to be accounted for: And the ram caught in the thicket was a very proper intimation to him that the typical ſacrifices were yet longer to continue. Nor could this act of Abraham be drawn into example ſo as to countenance human ſacrifices; ſince there was but one ſuch ſacrifice to be offered, and this muſt be of God's appointment.

In a word, it will make way for a clearer underſtanding all the following prophecies, wherein the ſufferings of the Redeemer are deſcribed, and ſome of them with the moſt ſurpriſing exactneſs.

But if I was to enter upon a conſideration of the prophecies of ſcripture, I might go near to make this preface longer than the book.

I ſhall take notice of one more however, becauſe it has a relation to the ſame great promiſe of a Redeemer (Gen. iii. 15.) which the adverſaries of Chriſtianity of late have been ſo willing to ſet aſide.

St. Paul's remarkable compariſon, by way of antitheſis, between Adam and Chriſt *, whom he calls the ſecond Adam or Man, is well known. But I do not know that the commentators ſend us to the Old Teſtament for any thing that may ſerve to juſtify the great Apoſtle in this compariſon. And yet I think there is a paſſage in the prayer of David (1 Sam. vii. 19. and 1 Chron. xvii. 17.) which ſhews that the Meſſiah was expected under this very character.

I confeſs I have not ſeen it taken notice of in this light by any of the interpreters or commentators; and therefore I muſt let it reſt upon its own evidence, after repreſenting the thing as fairly, and as briefly as I can.

Upon David's pious reſolution to build a houſe for God; which as appears from his way of expreſſing himſelf, he intended ſhould be very magnificent:

* Rom. v. 12.—1 Cor. xv. 21.

The

The prophet Nathan was ſo pleaſed with it, that he concluded God would be pleaſed with it to; and "ſaid to the king, go and do all that is in thine "heart: for the Lord is with thee." 2 Sam. vii. 3.

He was in the right to think that God would be pleaſed with the thing: but it ſeems the time for it was not yet come. And therefore Nathan is ſent the next day with a meſſage from God forbidding it; but at the ſame time with a very gracious promiſe to David, the chief part whereof we have from v. 12. to the 16th, in theſe words.

V. 12. And when thy days ſhall be fulfilled, and thou ſhalt ſleep with thy fathers, I will ſet up thy ſeed after thee, which ſhall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will eſtabliſh his kingdom.

13. He ſhall build an houſe for my name, and I will eſtabliſh the throne of his kingdom *for ever*.

14. I will be his father, and he ſhall be my ſon: If he commit iniquity I will chaſtiſe him with the rod of men, and with the ſtripes of the children of men.

15. But my mercy ſhall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

16. And thine houſe and thy kingdom ſhall be eſtabliſhed *for ever* before thee: thy throne ſhall be eſtabliſhed *for ever*.

Here are plainly ſome things that relate to Solomon: and ſome things of a higher nature, relating to a throne and a kingdom that ſhould be eſtabliſhed *for ever*.

The repetition of this laſt particular is very obſervable—"I will eſtabliſh "the throne of his kingdom *for ever*." Again, "and thine houſe and thy "kingdom ſhall be eſtabliſhed *for ever* before thee: thy throne ſhall be eſta-"bliſhed *for ever*."

It was this that ſtruck king David, as may be ſeen from the prayer he offers upon this occaſion.

For as ſoon as Nathan had delivered his meſſage, v. 17. "According to "all theſe words, and according to all this viſion, ſo did Nathan ſpeak unto "David." We are told immediately, v. 18. "Then went king David in, "and ſat before the Lord, and he ſaid, Who am I, O Lord God, and what "is my houſe, that thou haſt brought me hitherto?

V. 19. "And this was yet a ſmall thing in thy ſight, O Lord God; but "thou haſt ſpoken alſo of thy ſervant's houſe for a great while to come; "*and is this the manner of man, O Lord God?*"

It is this laſt clauſe I muſt dwell upon a little, *Is this the manner of man?* &c. There is no interrogation in the Hebrew, but a direct aſſertion; vezoth torath ha-Adam, Adonai Jehovah—literally, et iſta lex Adami, Domine Jehovah: This is the law of *the Adam*, or *the Man* (for the ה is demonſtrative and emphatical) O Lord Jehovah.

David

David could not but obſerve from the whole turn of the meſſage, that it was prophetical. It related to his ſeed after him that ſhould proceed out of his bowels, whoſe kingdom ſhould be eſtabliſhed. " He ſhall build an " houſe for my name." (ſays God) this Solomon did, " and I will eſta- " bliſh the throne of his kingdom for ever." Not in Solomon's hand ſurely; this could never be the meaning—nor could David apprehend it ſo.

In the next verſe Solomon's defection is foretold, but with a gracious promiſe however that God's mercy ſhould not depart from him, as " he took " it from Saul :" but that the kingdom ſhould be ſtill continued to his po- " ſterity."

And laſtly, it was foretold him in the ſtrongeſt terms, " Thine houſe and " thy kingdom ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever before thee : thy throne ſhall be " eſtabliſhed for ever."—

If the Jews either of former or of later times have interpreted this of a temporal kingdom; or ſuch as was intended for their nation only, to raiſe them to the height of glory : they have not only gone contrary to fact, but to the voices of their own prophets; who ſpeak of the kingdom of the Meſſiah, as everlaſting, and univerſal, and therefore (to be ſure) a ſpiritual one. " There was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peo- " ple, nations, and languages ſhould ſerve him : his dominion is an ever- " laſting dominion, which ſhall not paſs away, and his kingdom that which " ſhall not be deſtroyed." * ſays Daniel, of the " *Son of Man*"—an appellation (by the way) not very different from that of *Adam* or *the man.*

The following prophets are always good interpreters of thoſe that went before them. And as the prophet Daniel here ſaw the ſon of man inveſted with an everlaſting kingdom, ſo David, to whom the firſt prophecy was made of an everlaſting kingdom, as ſoon as he heard the great promiſe made him, " Thine houſe and thy kingdom ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever before " thee, thy throne ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever :" concludes that this could be no other than the kingdom of the ſon of man, or the ſecond man, the promiſed Redeemer. Zoth torath ha-Adam Adonai Jehovah. " This " ſurely O Lord Jehovah, thou great and everlaſting God, who madeſt and " governeſt all things" (for the ſeveral repetitions of Adonai Jehovah in this prayer is very obſervable) " This can be no other than the law, the fixed " decree concerning that other Adam or Man, that hath been ſo long promiſed " us;" that ſeed of the woman, who is to bruiſe the ſerpent's head; that ſeed of Abraham, in whom all nations of the earth are to be bleſſed; that ſeed of Iſaac, Jacob, Judah, the Shilah ſpoken of, to whom the gathering of the people is to be; and now declared to be the ſon of David, whoſe kingdom ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever.

* Ch. vii. 14.

We

We ſee how apt this ſenſe is: and if this be not the meaning of zoth torath ha-Adam; there is no other that I can perceive that is at all natural, or even tolerable. They who would ſee how much the commentators torture a text (I mean, if they can do it without feeling a little of the torture themſelves) may conſult them upon this text, if they pleaſe.

The ſpeech or prayer of David, as it is carried on in the following verſes, is ſuch as one might naturally expect from a perſon overwhelmed as it were with the greatneſs of the promiſed bleſſing: for it is abrupt, full of wonder, and fraught with repetitions.

V. 20. "And now what can David ſay more unto thee?" What indeed! "For thou Lord God, knoweſt thy ſervant"—Thou knoweſt the hearts of all men, and ſeeſt how full my own heart is.

V. 21, "For thy word's ſake," (or for the ſake of former prophecies) "and according to thine own heart"; (from the mere motive of thine own infinite wiſdom and goodneſs) "haſt thou done all theſe great things to make "thy ſervant know them?"

I now perceive, ſays this wiſe king, the reaſon of thoſe miraculous providences which have attended me from my youth up—"taken from the ſheep-"cote, from following the ſheep—" and conducted by thy mighty hand through all the dangers and difficulties that lay before me, till thou madeſt me "ruler of thy people Iſrael:" And ſhall I diſtruſt the promiſe that is now made me? No, thou art the Lord Jehovah, and thy word is truth.

I have borrowed the words of Nathan, v. 8. "I took thee from the "ſheep-cote," &c. and ſet them in this light, which ſeems to me to be the true one.

But I ſhall go no farther with David's words here. Only if it may ſeem to ſome that I have laid too great ſtreſs upon the words, zoth torath ha-Adam, v. 19. (though I muſt again declare, I can ſee no good ſenſe at all of the words any other way; much leſs a ſenſe ſo reaſonable as this) I ſhall deſire that they would attend to the parallel place in the hiſtory, as it is given us, 1 Chron. xvii. 17. And there they will find it thus—

"And yet this was a ſmall thing in thine eyes, O God, for thou haſt alſo "ſpoken of thy ſervant's houſe for a great while to come, and haſt regarded "me according to the eſtate of a man of high degree, O Lord God."

So the tranſlation, indeed, very unhappily and poorly—What a pitiful recognition is here made of a bleſſing ſo immenſe!

The words in the original are, U-reithani ce-tor ha-Adam ham-mayelah—literally, Et reſpexiſti me ſecundum diſpoſitionem Adami illius futuri—or, ſuperni. The word mayelah admits but of one of theſe two ſenſes; and you may take which you pleaſe. As a ſubſtantive indeed, it is uſed for a ſtep or ſtair, or an aſcent: but this ſenſe can have no place here. As an adverb it ſignifies ſuprà, and that both with reſpect to time and place: viz. *for-*

ward, or *future*, with reſpect to time; ſo 1 Sam. xvi. 13. mehajom ha hu vam-mayelah, " from that day and for the future," (we have the ſame expreſſion, 1 Sam. xxx. 25.) And *above*, with reſpect to place, of which the inſtances are common and need not be produced. The meaning therefore muſt be this—" And haſt regarded me according to the order or diſpoſition " of the future Adam, or the Adam from above." Thou haſt regarded me, that is, in the order of thy providence, as one from whom the ſecond Adam, or Man, the Redeemer is to deſcend.

You may turn the Bible from the beginning to the end, and you will not find Adam ham-mayelah put for a man of high degree: * much leſs ha-Adam, the *man*, as it is here. One certain perſon is plainly denoted: And who can that be, but the ſame which St. Paul ſpeaks of, Rom. v. 14. where he ſaith, the firſt Adam was τυπος τȣ̃ μέλλοντος, a type or figure of the *future*, that is, of the Adam ham-mayelah? (The words μέλλων and mayelah indeed are ſo near alike both in ſound and ſenſe, that it is not at all unreaſonable to ſuppoſe the Greek word derived from the Hebrew.) Or if you take mayelah here in its other ſenſe; then Adam ham-mayelah will be, (in the very identity of phraſe, viz. an adverb uſed for an adjective) ὁ ἄνω ἄνθρωπος, ſupernus homo—And who can that be, but the ſame perſon, of whom John Baptiſt in the New Teſtament ſaith) ὁ ἄνωθεν ἐρχόμενος, " He that cometh " *from above*, is above all" ‖? And our bleſſed Lord himſelf, " Ye are from " beneath: I am from " above." † " The firſt man" (ſays St. Paul) " is of the earth, earthy: the ſecond man is the Lord from Heaven." ‡ Where can we find better commentators than theſe upon any paſſage of the Old Teſtament?

St. Paul then, who was well read in the traditional explications of the prophecies of the Old Teſtament, had, (I make no doubt) this paſſage; and perhaps others that are as yet undiſcovered by us, in his view; when he drew that parallel betwixt the firſt and ſecond Adam.

It were to be wiſhed the Jews would take this great Apoſtle for their teacher; one bred up at the feet of Gamaliel, (a doctor ſtill in high repute with them) and who knew more of their traditions, probably, and could diſtinguiſh the gold from the droſs much better, than all their rabbins that have lived ſince the deſtruction of their city and temple by the Romans.

I think we may correct an error of the Cabaliſts from the light which is here given us by St. Paul: and ſhew them from this inſtance, that though their traditions, ſome of them, may be founded in truth, and carry an im-

* A man of high degree in the Hebrew is אִישׁ *Iſh* gadol, *Iſh* nicbad, &c. And tho' this diſtinction betwixt Adam and Iſh be not always obſerved; yet we find two or three inſtances in the Pſalms, of ſons of *Adam* and ſons of *Iſh* oppoſed and diſtinguiſhed as men of *low* degree, and *high*. See Pſ. xlix. 2. and lxii. 9.

‖ John iii. 31. † John viii. 23. ‡ 1 Corinth. xv. 47.

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portant meaning; yet there is no depending on the interpretation which their wiſe men put upon them.

The word אדם ADaM, is one of thoſe ſymbolical words (which I have before ſpoken of as in uſe among the Rabbins) made up of the initial letters of Adam, David, Meſſiah. And the interpretation of it that hath long obtained, is in the tranſmigration-way, the gilgul han nephaſhoth, or neſhamoth (as they call it) *the revolution of ſouls*, viz. that the ſame ſoul, in the courſe of its revolution, was to inform or animate theſe three perſons, firſt Adam, then David, and laſt of all the Meſſiah.

But take it in the words of Herm. Witſius (*Ægyptiaca*, p. 15.) Certè Cabaliſtarum opinio eſt, animam primi hominis volvendo perveniſſe in corpus Davidis regis, et ex Davide volvendam in corpus Meſſiæ: idque ſignificari per literas quæ ſunt in voce אדם, quarum unaquæque integram dictionem conſtituat, א Adam, ד David, ם Meſſias.

This interpretation may, for any thing that appears to the contrary, be as old as the ſect of the Phariſees; or at leaſt, as their adopting the Pythagorean notion of the tranſmigration of ſouls. But the ſymbol itſelf might be much older, and have a more important meaning, though in length of time forgotten. And as I have ſhewn, that David, in this prayer of his, ſpeaks of the Meſſiah, or Redeemer, as another Adam; the Adam from above, or the future Adam; but now plainly foretold, as to deſcend from *Him*: ſuch a truth as this might be very naturally truſted to this ſymbol for conveyance, the prophet David being here the link that joins theſe two together. And this ſeems to be the moſt natural interpretation of this ſymbol.

I ſhall only add, that the Chaldee Paraphraſt evidently favours the interpretation I have given of thoſe words of David, zoth torath ha-Adam, 2 Sam. vii. 19. For his expoſition of them directly points at the Meſſiah. It is thus——"Thou haſt ſpoken of thy ſervant's houſe," le-yalmah de-athe, "for the age to come:" ve-da chezia li-b'nê anaſha, Jehovah Elohim, "and this is a viſion for the ſons of men, O Lord God." And ſo the Latin tranſlation in the Polyglott, Et locutus es etiam ſuper domum ſervi tui in ſeculum quod venit: & hæc eſt viſio filiis hominis Domine Deus.

Every one knows that by the *age to come* they meant the days of the Meſſiah. So that the meaning of the Paraphraſt ſeems plainly this—"Thou haſt "ſpoken of thy ſervant's houſe even to the age of the Meſſiah: and this is "a viſion therefore, or a freſh prediction, of that great and univerſal bleſ-"ſing to the ſons of men."

As I have been led into theſe reflections by an unſkilful remark of Lord Bolinbroke's on a paſſage of the ſcripture-hiſtory; I cannot but take notice with concern of the great contempt with which his Lordſhip every where ſpeaks of the hiſtorical part of the Old Teſtament, and the "incredible anec-

" dotes" (as he calls them) or the miracles recorded there; as if every thing miraculous were preſently to be diſcarded as incredible; or as if a revelation from God could be given without ſome ſuch atteſtation; or that ſuch a revelation were either needleſs or uſeleſs——Whereas on the contrary, nothing can be more uſeful or deſirable than ſuch a revelation—nor more reaſonable than to ſuppoſe that it ſhould be attended with ſuch extraordinary atteſtation ——nor more eaſy to conceive, than that God ſhould work a miracle.

As it would be to little purpoſe that we ſhould endeavour to recommend or to illuſtrate any particular book of ſcripture, when the authority of the whole is thus brought in queſtion; if I add a few pages here to obviate this unreaſonable prejudice (and a prejudice, I doubt, that is but too prevailing) I hope it will not be thought beſide the purpoſe either of this preface or the book.

By the ſcornful air ſome gentlemen give themſelves upon this ſubject, one would think it were a ſelf-evident propoſition, or a ſort of natural dictate, that a miracle is a thing impoſſible. But if this were ſo, it were impoſſible that any falſe pretences to them could ſo eaſily impoſe on the unwary. The dictate of nature ſeems to be, that God can and doth interpoſe in an extraordinary manner upon great and extraordinary occaſions. The unnatural ſentiment of an Eſprit fort is, that if he can he never does. None but an Atheiſt, ſurely, or one who reſolves all into fate and neceſſity, can conſiſtently deny the poſſibility of miracles.

All that a wiſe man therefore has to do, is to guard againſt impoſture and enthuſiaſm (whereby the hiſtory of mankind, it is true, ſupplies us with innumerable inſtances) but not to reject the truth of God, for the folly or the knavery of men.

It is ſtrange to obſerve, to what lengths of incredulity theſe gentlemen will proceed, to ſet aſide all hiſtory and all facts, that have the leaſt tendency to prove that God hath given a religion to mankind. But the truth is, facts of this kind muſt needs be frightful, ſtaggering things, and as terrible as an apparition, to the man that would have the pleaſure of making a religion for himſelf. They diſturb him ſo, that he can neither philoſophize nor live with as much freedom as he would.

Could his Lordſhip have diſcredited the miracles of the Old Teſtament, by ſhewing them incapable of that hiſtorical proof which he demanded (and he took care indeed, to make the conditions of his proof impoſſible *) yet he would have done nothing to the purpoſe, unleſs he could have diſcredited thoſe of the New Teſtament likewiſe. Becauſe theſe, conſidering the con-

* For example, He demands "collateral teſtimony of thoſe who had no common intereſt of country, or religion," *&c.* to confirm the Scripture account of things: when it is manifeſt, that there are no other books extant in the univerſe ſo old by five hundred years, as the oldeſt books of Scripture. See his Works, Vol. III. pa. 275. 4to.

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nection of the two diſpenſations, muſt needs reflect a great credibility on thoſe of the Old. And we know that theſe were done, not in the remote and darker ages of the world, but in open daylight; when the world was at its meridian (if we may ſo ſpeak) for learning, philoſophy, and free enquiry: miracles great, many, carrying the ſtrongeſt conviction in the manner of their performance; and in their nature miracles of mercy; ſuited to a diſpenſation wherein the divine philanthropy ſo eminently appeared; and peculiarly fitted to eſtabliſh a character ſo ſingular as that of the great meſſenger of a covenant of peace and reconciliation with mankind, "declared to be the "ſon of God with power, the author of eternal ſalvation to them that obey "him, and the appointed judge of the world"——miracles recorded by eye-witneſſes, and the truth of them abundantly confirmed by the very ſpreading of Chriſtianity under all the difficulties and diſcouragements that human policy or power could lay in its way; the multitudes of converts that were made to it; and the many lives that were ſacrificed for the belief of it in the firſt century of the goſpel; I mean, during the lives of the apoſtles, and within a few years after.

For theſe are the martyrs, or witneſſes in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, that we may and ought to inſiſt on; witneſſes of facts, whereof, in the apoſtolical age at leaſt, they had the fulleſt aſſurance, and the belief whereof they profeſſed and maintained at the expence of their lives. And I could wiſh this noble argument in proof of our religion were duly weighed. For I think we may collect from the Heathen writers as well as Chriſtian, that the martyrs for Chriſtianity under Nero, for inſtance, and Trajan, (to go no farther) one of the worſt, and one of the beſt of the Roman emperors (but good or bad, reaſons of ſtate prevailed with them more than all the ſentiments of humanity) were vaſtly numerous.

To which if we add the purity and excellency of the religion itſelf, which theſe miraculous powers, and this miraculous patience were intended to eſtabliſh; a bleſſing ſo ſeaſonable, ſo much wanted, ſo fitted to ſet a new face upon the world, and to reſtore the human race to a juſt ſenſe of their original dignity, which will ever be the beſt and ſureſt motive to engage them to cultivate every virtue: ——Here is enough (one would think) to extort the aſſent of every ſenſible and ſober man.

The goodneſs of the deſign, indeed, is very frankly acknowledged by Lord B. himſelf. "Had men kept cloſely (ſays he) to what the Saviour "taught, ſuppoſing Chriſtianity to have been purely an human invention, "it had been the moſt amiable and the moſt uſeful invention that was ever "impoſed on mankind for their good." * And ſo elſewhere, when he was in a good mood, he could ſay——"In all caſes the Goſpel of Chriſt is one

* Works, Vol. IV. 4to. pa. 394.

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continued leſſon of the ſtricteſt morality, of juſtice, of benevolence, and of univerſal charity *."

And yet all this goodneſs could not exempt it from the weak efforts of this noble writer to undermine its authority: as if he was reſolved to receive it upon no other terms, or in no other light, than as a mere human invention; and then indeed it might be managed juſt as the philoſopher, or the politician pleaſed.

But how unhappily are his arguments upon this head conducted! In Letter V, on the ſtudy of hiſtory, after a long and vehement complaint of the corruption, miſrepreſentation, falſe quotation of hiſtory, &c. and ſaying that "hiſtory alone can furniſh the proper proofs that the religion we teach "is of God," † his Lordſhip endeavours to fix the charge of a miſtake on Abbadie and biſhop Gibſon, for ſaying, that the Goſpel of St. Matthew, and ſo of Mark, is cited by Clement Biſhop of Rome, by Barnabas, Ignatius, &c. and calls it an "abuſe of hiſtory, and quite inexcuſable in wri-"ters that knew, or ſhould have known, that theſe fathers made uſe of "*other goſpels*, wherein ſuch paſſages might be contained"—And in another place he tells us from Fabricius, that theſe goſpels were at leaſt forty.

Whatever becomes of the argument againſt Abbadie and the biſhop then (wherein, nevertheleſs, I apprehend his Lordſhip was more miſtaken than they) here is an argument in favour of Chriſtianity well worthy of our conſideration, as it gives the ſtrongeſt aſſurance of the notoriety of the facts reſpecting our Savour. His miracles were wrought in the moſt public manner, and had ſometimes great numbers of ſpectators; and by the viſible effects which remained of moſt of them, ſtill greater numbers of competent witneſſes: and here we are told, that the things relating to him were recorded by at leaſt forty writers. What a cauſe have theſe gentlemen undertaken to plead for, which is ſo eaſily overturned and buried in the ruins of their own arguments or objections! St. Luke indeed acquaints us at the beginning of his Goſpel, that many had undertaken the ſame ſubject before him ‡. Nor does the Evangeliſt find fault with them: no more ſhall I. It is not to be wondered at, that things ſo known, ſo ſtrange, ſo intereſting, ſhould employ ſo many pens. And as it appears from this remarkable proem of St. Luke, that theſe Goſpel-writers were very early as well as numerous; ſo, for any thing that appears to the contrary, their accounts might be very exact: although for want of that apoſtolical authority which was neceſſary to their being received as ſacred and authentic hiſtories, they were ſuffered of courſe to periſh; or perhaps ſome of them corrupted to ſerve the purpoſes of the buſy heads of after times, and ſo we may have the ſhattered remains of them in this collection of Fabricius.

* Works, Vol. V. pa. 187. † Letters, pa. 142. 8vo. ‡ See Luke i. 1, 2.

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Be this how it will, if (as the noble writer obſerves) " a religion founded on the authority of a divine miſſion" appeals to facts; * could there be a ſtronger proof of the notoriety of thoſe facts that evidenced our Saviour's miſſion, than that ſo many writers employed themſelves ſo early in a diligent enquiry after, in collecting and recording them? Nevertheleſs, to prevent that confuſion and diſtraction which ſo many writers might occaſion, as well as to guard againſt the forged and ſpurious productions of after times, it was a great inſtance of the divine wiſdom and goodneſs, to fix the number of thoſe hiſtorians or evangeliſts, whoſe writings alone were to be held as ſacred and authentic.

For that we may not confound the right and the approved Goſpels with the apocryphal and rejected ones, Lord B. produces for us the teſtimony of Irenæus (the diſciple of Polycarp, the diſciple of the Evangeliſt St. John, and ſo but a remove or two from the Apoſtles themſelves) that the four Goſpels we make uſe of were the only ones received and acknowledged by the Chriſtian churches. We ſhould ſcarce have had this conceſſion from his Lordſhip, but that it afforded him an opportunity of ridiculing the good old man, for a weak argument he had brought, to ſhew, that they ought to be four Goſpels and no more. Had he produced a ſtronger argument, and it had not ſuited his Lordſhip's taſte, he muſt of courſe have been ranked amongſt the fools or madmen.

But now if hiſtory alone muſt furniſh the proper proofs " that our " religion is of God," what had his Lordſhip to oppoſe to theſe authentic hiſtories of Chriſt? Could he produce any one book written either by a Jew or Heathen of thoſe early times (and ſure there were ſome of them that could read and write) contradicting theſe accounts, or denying that the bleſſed Jeſus wrought miracles? No, this was a thing acknowledged, tho' we may ſuppoſe much againſt their wills, by the earlieſt adverſaries of Chriſtianity in their writings. Struck with the apparent evidence of the fact itſelf, the philoſophers among the Heathens had no other ſhift to make, but to oppoſe to the genuine miracles of Chriſt, the real or pretended tricks of magic, the feats of an Apollonius Tyanæus, or ſomething that might ſerve to puzzle a cauſe which they were unwilling to give up. The ways of men are as perverſe and unaccountable, as thoſe of God are upright and adorable—It is happy for us that the plain narration given us in the Goſpels of our Saviour's miracles and the manner of their performance, is of itſelf ſufficient to obviate all the wild ſuggeſtions of theſe men and their followers. We have there indeed an inimitable picture of the author and finiſher of our faith; whoſe wiſe diſcourſes, and whoſe patient ſufferings, added to his mighty works, raiſe in the well-diſpoſed mind that is ſuſceptible of religious impreſ-

* Lett. on Hiſt. p. 141, 8vo.

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ſions, the idea of a perſon inexpreſſibly great and humble—the divine word or wiſdom, clothed with humanity—or "made fleſh, and ſhecinizing "amongſt men" (I muſt borrow a little of the Hebrew phraſeology here) that they might "behold his glory; the glory as of the only begotten of the "Father." John i. 14.

But perhaps I needed not to have laboured this point ſo much againſt the noble writer, whoſe conceſſions in one place overthrow his objections in another, and who, when he was in the humour for it, very freely acknowledged the Goſpel-miracles. But then it muſt be confeſſed, that it was with an unlucky intention of ſetting the New-Teſtament againſt the Old, and confronting the miracles of Moſes with thoſe of Chriſt and his Apoſtles*: though the different nature and intention of the two diſpenſations (could his Lordſhip have had the patience to conſider it) might have helped him to reconcile the ſpirit of the one with the other, without queſtioning the divine authority of either.

After all it ſhould be remembered, that we have little need of the miracles of Moſes, or of the following prophets, to ſupport Chriſtianity. The great proof of our religion from the Old-Teſtament ſtands in the fulfilling of the prophecies which are there delivered; and to examine theſe therefore is the firſt ſtep that ſhould be taken by thoſe who mean to prove or diſprove it thence. The hiſtory is as the vehicle of the prophecies. And that both were extant long before our Saviour came into the world, is a point ſo evident, that no adverſary of Chriſtianity, that I know of, hath had ſo little modeſty as to queſtion it. Let the prophecies than be examined and compared with the events. As theſe are many, clear, and full; the prophecies of different perſons and of different ages, all uniting in one great, and wiſe, and gracious ſcheme of providence, tending to the honour of Almighty God, and the infinite benefit of mankind: if theſe have been fulfilled in their appointed ſeaſon, here is as clear a proof as can be well conceived of a divine interpoſition.

And a divine interpoſition once proved from the prophecies, will leave no longer any room to doubt of the ſame interpoſition in the conduct of that people, who were choſen out to be the keepers of theſe ſacred oracles; and who were therefore to be kept themſelves by an extraordinary providence miraculouſly exerting itſelf at proper times, to prevent their being ſwallowed up and loſt, and ſo their religion and their ſacred books periſhing with them.

* See Lord B——'s Works, Vol. V. about pa. 187, Quarto. "They healed the lame, "they cured the blind, they even raiſed the dead to prove their miſſion ——— Moſes "proved his miſſion by miracles likewiſe. But the miracles wrought by them in the mild "and beneficent ſpirit of Chriſtianity tended to the good of mankind; whereas the "miracles he wrought in the fierce and cruel ſpirit of Judaiſm, tended to the deſtruction of "mankind."

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Here then is a way opened for conſidering the hiſtory in its true light. And they who would judge with caution upon any point whatever, make it a rule to themſelves to take in the whole circumſtance of things *, and will never content themſelves with partial views, eſpecially in matters of ſo high importance. But, to quarrel with the hiſtory firſt; or to conſider it without any relation to the prophecies, and the ſcheme of providence carried on by the Jewiſh and Chriſtian diſpenſations, (which is the great error of this noble writer) is a very prepoſterous method of proceeding, and an eaſy way for a raſh or proud man to entangle himſelf in the ſnares of infidelity.

It is a hiſtory of miracles (ſays Ld. B.) and it is this that ſhocks his delicacy. It is a hiſtory of providence (ſay we) and therefore a miraculous interpoſition at certain times is what might naturally be expected, and is highly credible.

" If it were not a hiſtory of miracles," (ſays his Lordſhip) or, in his own phraſe, " of incredible anecdotes, it would be a hiſtory of nothing. †"

If by this be meant, that it would contain nothing that is worth recording; we may reply, that it is a hiſtory of revealed religion, its riſe and progreſs through the ſeveral ages of the world, till it ſhone out in the fulneſs of the Goſpel. If this were nothing in Ld. B's account, there may be others who think it a matter of the higheſt conſideration.

Beſide fixing the principles and meaſures of our conduct, this (ſurely) if any thing, muſt give a check to the pride and the corrupt paſſions of mankind, and incline them to think ſoberly at leaſt, and to give reaſon, rightly ſo called, a fair hearing: that ſo every man may not take his own uninſtructed or perverted reaſon (or rather ever-varying humour, imagination or affection) for " his own oracle" ‡; and ſo of courſe do every man that which is right in his own eyes. If it were a thing to be doubted of, whether man be not a ſtrange, inconſiſtent, fluctuating creature, when left to the full ſcope of his own thoughts and reaſonings (ſubject as he is to ſtrong appetites and paſſions) even where there are great endowments natural and acquired, I think this noble writer's works might go a good way to convince us.

If a revealed religion then be ſo uſeful and deſirable a thing in the reſpect that I have mentioned, beſide others which I have not; this, one would think, ſhould make it reaſonable to believe, that God may have given mankind ſuch a religion from the beginning, and ſo create a prejudice in favour of the Holy Scriptures.

* Incivile eſt, ut monent jureconſulti, particulam aliquam legis ſumere, non perſpectâ totâ lege.

† Letter occaſioned by one of Tillotſon's ſermons.

‡ " Every man's reaſon is every man's oracle." Letter on retirement and ſtudy.

Indeed the contrary ſuppoſition ſeems to be attended with this abſurdity, that the God of truth hath made it neceſſary that the world ſhould be governed by a lie. For if ſome religion be neceſſary, and none were ever given by God; it would be left to men themſelves to ſupply, by their own inventions, that wherein the divine goodneſs was wanting to ſupply them; and their religion could be little elſe but a variety of falſhood or fiction.

Even theſe gentlemen (ſome of them at leaſt) contend, that Polytheiſm and Idolatry would in this caſe be naturally the firſt religion that men would form for themſelves. But if this be ſo, it is a demonſtration that the firſt religion was revealed: for we are ſure, that it was quite another thing, viz, the worſhip of the one true God, the creator and governor of all things.

How men afterwards fell into Polytheiſm and Idolatry, is eaſily accounted for: and being a matter of their own free choice, and their own great fault, does not in the leaſt reflect upon the wiſdom, juſtice, or goodneſs of God: but made way for a brighter diſplay of all theſe attributes, in the reſtoration and redemption of mankind.

So that the Chriſtian ſcheme is every way conſiſtent, rational, and intelligible. As to theirs—to ſay the truth, one ſcarce knows whether they have any ſcheme at all. The utmoſt that the moſt ingenious of them can arrive at, is a degree of ſcepticiſm, more or leſs——a deliberate ſtate of doubt——"an "eſcape" (from the bright ſunſhine of the Goſpel; ſo offenſive to weak eyes) "into the calm, though obſcure, regions of philoſophy."

But what a ſtate muſt this be, where all the calm that is to be had, is owing to darkneſs or obſcurity! A profound ſleep then, one would think, ſhould be the wiſh and choice of theſe gentlemen. Or, if they muſt needs be employed——why do they not erect ſome Academy of No Science, where they may debate, with as much calmneſs and obſcurity as they pleaſe, theſe or the like profound and puzzling queſtions——Whether hiſtory be of any credit——Whether learning be of any uſe——Whether a book or writing may be underſtood——Whether there be any ſuch thing as truth——Whether there ever was ſuch a perſon as the Saviour; or whether we have ſouls to ſave——Whether that which hath been may be——Whether it be poſſible that we may live hereafter——Or, whether we can be ſure that we live at preſent.

What a large field is here for our gentlemen of taſte and ſcepticiſm to expatiate in! and what edifying productions might we not expect to ſee from time to time, drawn up in the moſt polite and faſhionable phraſe, with philoſophical diſputations, pro and con; and ſtill concluding with the *nihil ſcire* ——or ſometimes, *ne id ipſum quidem.*

But let us return from theſe gloomy regions of doubt, of endleſs wanderings and perplexity, into the upper air of light and truth. What I was about to obſerve is this—that a revelation once ſuppoſed; the very nature of the

the thing will lead us to expect a mixture of those extraordinary anecdotes which were so offensive to Ld. B. and which he therefore styles incredible. For a history of revealed religion without any miraculous incidents, or an extraordinary interposition of divine providence, would be an incredible thing indeed.

If by "a history of miracles or nothing" the noble writer only meant to point at the frequency of them, as if they had filled up almost every page of the Old Testament; we must take leave to say, that this representation of the thing is very hyperbolical.

The scripture-miracles had their proper seasons; were wrought to plant religion, to preserve, or to reform it; to evince the superiority of the true God over the false ones; or when the affairs of his people were at a crisis, so that they were in great danger, as a nation, of being utterly extirpated, and the very purpose for which they were a chosen people defeated, had not omnipotent wisdom interposed for their preservation.

God could have interposed (you will say, perhaps) without a miracle—He could, no doubt, and doth, and will carry on the great work of his providence by many ways that we are unacquainted with.

But how, after all, if men should be so weak or perverse as to deny that there is any interposal of God's providence in human affairs? Will you leave him no way to convince them? We see how apt men are to doubt or to deny a providence, after all the miraculous proofs that have been given of it: and how would the case stand, do we think, if no one instance of that kind could be produced?

A proof of fact that God governs the world, is precisely what men seem to want, and what the scripture-history supplies us with. And if prophecies, and miracles, and a scheme of providence, to which they are subservient, apparently wise and good, carried on from the beginning of the world, and reaching even to the end of it, be not such a proof, it is scarce possible to conceive what other proof men can demand, or could be given them.

Here then is that true light wherein the scripture-miracles are to be regarded by us; and which must for ever distinguish them from mimickry and imposture, and all the little arts and tricks of men. The great and wise design of God carried on by the Jewish and Christian dispensations, gives a strong proof or credibility to the miracles (for miracles, or no miracles, are alike easy to omnipotence). And again, both these are supported by the prophecies still extant in the Old Testament, given out at sundry times and in divers manners, for centuries of years before the birth of Christ; and apparently fulfilled by him at his coming; as may be seen from the Gospels, and other books of the New Testament.

Thus is it that theſe two volumes lend a mutual ſupport to each other, and meeting like an arch, remain, and will remain, firm and immoveable (notwithſtanding the wild torrents of infidelity that may ſometimes threaten them) as long as there ſhall be virtue enough left in the Chriſtian world to incline men to ſtudy them, and learning to enable them to interpret and defend them.

If I have exceeded either in the length or warmth of this apology for the ſacred writings; the importance of the ſubject muſt be pleaded by me in excuſe for it. For if there be a queſtion of the neareſt concern to us, both with reſpect to our temporal and eternal intereſts, it is certainly this before us.

Unhappily as the Chriſtian world ſtands divided, it is a pleaſure to reflect, that Proteſtants (in general, as I apprehend) profeſs to take the Holy Scriptures for the only rule of their faith. The ſuperiority which this muſt ever give them over thoſe of the Romiſh perſuaſion, is real, ſolid, and ineſtimable. It is well known, that Popery, in its corrupt part, is merely a political device, irreconcileable with ſcripture; ſo that they are under a neceſſity either of declining its authority, or of claiming to themſelves an authority of interpreting it, or of ſubſtituting the decrees of popes and councils in the room of it, which are therefore, in reality, *their rule*. And this makes a reformation of Popery impoſſible, without a renunciation of the principles of Popery.

They who receive the Holy Scriptures for their rule, have on the other hand this great advantage; that whatever errors may have crept into particular churches, here is a fixed ſtandard whereby to rectify them, without departing from their avowed principle. The authority of God alone is here ſubmitted to implicitly. Truth, learning, an ingenuous liberty, a virtue fixed on its right baſis, and a piety ſincere; an union of charity (at leaſt) ſo ſtrongly recommended in theſe ſacred pages, as well as a fair proſpect of uniting more and more even in ſentiment or opinion, will ever be on this ſide of the queſtion. An ignorant ſuperſtition, a forced diſſimulation of ſentiments, a refined but irreligious policy; fraud, violence, cruelty, and ſlavery, ſeem naturally to range themſelves on the other.

The happineſs of ſociety, of individuals, of this world and the next, is opened to us, and for ever flowing from the inexhauſtible fountain of divine wiſdom, through the channel of this ſacred book. "The ſtreams are mine (ſays a particular, univerſal, miſtaken, infallible church) "and you ſhall have "none of them without my licence—They are dangerous and unwholeſome, "if taken ſimply as they flow from their ſpring-head in Paradiſe. I muſt "medicate them for you, and then you may ſip a little—If the potion "ſhould look foul, you may ſhut your eyes: or if it ſeem bitter, it is but

"to

" to renounce your taſte." I muſt not proceed in this way, in an affair ſo ſerious.

But if this be the real ſtate of the caſe; we may naturally hope, that this great diviſion, which has now ſubſiſted for two hundred years and more, may leſſen by degrees, and end at laſt (through the divine bleſſing) to the advantage of the Proteſtant cauſe, if we ſtill adhere to the great Proteſtant principle, which muſt ever be eſteemed a fundamental. If we ſtudy and reverence this ſacred book, which we profeſs to take for our rule; and if we make it our rule indeed, by conforming to its dictates, and ſo honour that God who gave it us——For *thoſe that honour him he will honour.*

It is the policy of the Romaniſts to repreſent this book as obſcure. Let us endeavour to clear it for them. Their commentators often tell us, that we muſt interpret the Holy Scriptures according to the analogy of faith—meaning that faith, no doubt, which is contained in their creed or catechiſms; in which ſenſe the rule is evidently falſe, as well as highly derogatory to the honour of Almighty God. Take it indeed in any other ſenſe than this, that one part of the Scripture is to be interpreted by another, according to the beſt underſtanding that we have; and this principle ſeems to be dangerous and enſnaring. They often amuſe us with encomiums on that union and concord which muſt ariſe from an implicit acquieſcenſe in their infallibility. But ſuch an union by mere force—ſuch a " calm with ſo much obſcurity"—is fit only for thoſe who have brought themſelves to doubt of every thing: for ſuch as theſe may profeſs any thing, or nothing——I am far from thinking, however, that theſe gentlemen are fond of coming under ſuch a yoke, or that they have the leaſt intention to drive others into it. But they would do well to conſider, what may be the natural conſequence of endeavouring to take off the minds of men from a due reverence for that ſacred book, which is our chief bulwark both againſt Popery and profligacy, and leaving them in an unſettled ſtate. When the mind is thus diſengaged, and brought into ſuſpence, paulo momento huc illuc impellitur, ſays a very ſenſible obſerver of mankind—the leaſt weight of intereſt or policy will turn the ſcale in favour of any profeſſion of religion, where there is no real religion to obſtruct it. And this probably may beſt account for the ſo much talked of growth of Popery amongſt us, which can ſcarce be owing to any rational conviction.

And yet it is ſurprizing to obſerve with what art theſe great maſters of a worldly policy have been able to blend their own cauſe with that of Chriſtianity and the Holy Scriptures, ſo as thereby to impoſe even upon men of ſenſe. The authority " of theſe books" (ſays the noble writer I have often mentioned; and who, one would think, ſhould have known better) " is " maintained in ſome countries by inquiſitors and hangmen. *" As if

* Ld. B's Works, Quarto, Vol. III. about p. 271.

main-

maintaining image-worſhip, prayers to ſaints, tranſubſtantiation and implicit faith, the pope's ſupremacy, and ſuch other things as theſe books know nothing of or condemn, were maintaining the authority of theſe books.

Under this deluſion, it is no wonder if his lordſhip picked up his objections to the Holy Scriptures from ſome of the worſt of the Romiſh writers; though the very beſt of them, for an obvious reaſon, learned and uſeful as they are upon other ſubjects, are not always to be truſted upon this.

Under this deluſion, it is not ſtrange to find his L———p aſſerting, that "Chriſtianity hath been in decay ever ſince the reſurrection of letters: *" though it be well known that the reſurrection of letters was ſoon followed with a reformation of corrupted and abuſed Chriſtianity, by bringing it back to the ſtandard of the Holy Scripture.

Chriſtianity then, which roſe with the reſurrection of letters, and was happily refixed upon its proper baſis, can never be ſaid to have loſt any thing by it; (though it is to be hoped Popery has, and ever will) and if it be true, that it is at preſent in decay, we muſt look out for ſome other cauſe of it than either a reſurrection or a cultivation of learning; unleſs its adverſaries can perſuade the world that they have all the learning on their ſide; which they will never be able to do, by their preſent conduct at leaſt, and that avowed contempt of literature which is grown ſo faſhionable amongſt them. But what need of hard ſtudy and taking pains, when a ſprightly wit can ſee through every thing with a glance of his eye?

If theſe gentlemen will not be angry, we might borrow a well known obſervation of Ld. Verulam, and accommodate it here; and this perhaps will account in part for this extraordinary phænomenon. "Verum eſt tamen "(ſays that ſagacious author) parum philoſophiæ naturalis homines incli-"nare in atheiſmum, at altiorem ſcientiam eos ad religionem circumagere.†" It may be true, that a little learning will incline men to infidelity; but then a full meaſure of it, probably would wheel them back again, and make them Chriſtians.

I cannot forbear ſaying, that it was not an abundance of learning, whatever it was, that made Ld. B. no better Chriſtian, or that gave him ſuch an unreaſonable diſguſt of the Holy Scriptures. If any, nevertheleſs, be in danger of being miſled by the authority of this admired writer, and the opinion they may have entertained of his judgment or capacity: we can only oppoſe authority to authority. And as I have ſaid ſomewhat of the Boyles and Lockes at the concluſion of the Book, ſo here at the concluſion of this Preface I ſhall take leave to inſtance in another excellent perſon, whom I believe Ld. B's greateſt admirers will allow to have been his equal in all reſpects; (others may think greatly his ſuperior) for he was a wiſe ſtateſman, an able and impartial hiſtorian, and had undoubtedly as much knowledge and

* Letter on Hiſt. p. 149. 2d Ed. Octavo. † Serm. Fidel.

good

good ſenſe as Ld. Bolinbroke, without affecting to philoſophize in a way ſo ſtrange and ſingular; I mean the celebrated Thuanus, or Monſ. de Thou.—One who, though he was bred up, and lived and died in the communion of the church of Rome, which is not apt to give a favourable bent that way, yet, "having in truth" (as an eloquent preacher * ſaid of him) "more good-"neſs than the principles of that religion do either incline men to, or allow "of," was ſuch a lover and admirer of the Holy Scriptures, that he turned the book of Job, the Eccleſiaſtes, Jeremiah's Lamentations, and ſeveral of the Minor Prophets, into Latin verſe.

As theſe poems are expreſsly mentioned in his life, I cannot but think it a great omiſſion in the London edition of Thuanus's hiſtory, that they were not inſerted amongſt the other pieces in the ſeventh or laſt volume. And the bookſeller's reaſon for not doing it appears very unſatisfactory, unleſs he had then ſome intention (as probably he had) to publiſh this great man's poems ſeparately in a leſſer volume. Theſe tranſlations, however, would have taken up but little room, and might have been thought by ſome a great ornament to the work. For Thuanus had a very eaſy, and a very maſterly way of verſifying. †

I have only this to add——That although I could have ſtrengthened many paſſages in the book by increaſing the notes, I have purpoſely avoided it for two reaſons: becauſe of the interruption which a frequent turning to the margin for a note is apt to give to the attention of the reader; but chiefly, becauſe thoſe who bought up the firſt impreſſion having paid a full price for it, I was unwilling to leſſen the value of their purchaſe by ſuch new additions to this ſecond. If there be any thing in this long preface which they may think worthy their peruſal, I have ordered it to be printed in quarto, the ſame number as the quarto edition, and *for their uſe only*.

* See Archbiſhop Tillotſon's remarkable fifth of November ſermon, preached A. D. 1678, Vol. I. Fol. p. 208.

† Pineda, who has a commentary upon the little book of Eccleſiaſtes of above a thouſand pages in folio, beſides a *Solomon prævius*, as he calls it, or a ſort of general preface to his commentary on the books of Solomon, containing near eight hundred pages more; (I take notice of this the rather, to juſtify what I have ſaid of the voluminouſneſs of the Jeſuit commentators) has inſerted a good part of Thuanus's tranſlation of Eccleſiaſtes into his commentary, as well as that of Ar. Montanus, and ſome others. It is pleaſant to obſerve the difference betwixt the genteel and eaſy manner of Thuanus, and the ſcholar-like, exact, but rougher and obſcurer poetry of Montanus. But what I meant to obſerve, is, that this learned Jeſuit, to give him his due, hath left us the following very juſt character of this poetical performance of Thuanus.——Jacobi Auguſti Thuani heroica metaphraſis, dulcis, arguta, leniter fluens æquè ac gravis, plena, meditata: ſed ut eſt ſententioſa, ita quicquid ſententiarum habet ex annotationibus Bibliorum Stephani ſeu Vatabli deprompſit.

The word *meditata* puts me in mind of what is ſaid in Thuanus's life, that the tranſlation of the book of Job coſt him a labour of two years ‡: ſo that this, I conclude, muſt have been a well ſtudied, and well finiſhed work.

‡ Totum biennium in eum incubuit—de Vita ſuâ, p. 71.

Advertiſement of ERRATA for the Quarto Preface.

PAGE 5. Line 27. for *met*, read *meet*.
Pa. 9. li. 6. for ופללר, r. ופללו. Ibid. li. 7, for *ſo*, r. *lo*.
Pa. 14. li. 13. for *his*, r. *this*. Ibid. Not. for *futuram*, r. *futurum*.
Pa. 18. li. 31. for *liquit*, r. *liquet*.
Pa. 20. li. 32. for *ingenious*, r. *ingenuous*.
Pa. 27. li. 24. for *vicunt*, r. *vincunt*.
Pa. 28. li. 17. for *too*, r. *two*.
Ibid. li. 21. for *get out but a little towards*, r. *get but* a little *light* towards, &c.
Pa. 29. li. 6. for *capacity*, r. *captivity*.
Ibid. li. 26. for *this claſs*, r. this *laſt* claſs.
Pa. 31. li. 30. Not. for *than*, r. *rather than*.
Pa. 43. li. 36. for *And if*, r. *And* I *if*.
Pa. 47. li. 2. for *to*, r. *too*.
Pa. 52. li. 24. for *whereby*, r. *whereof*.

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